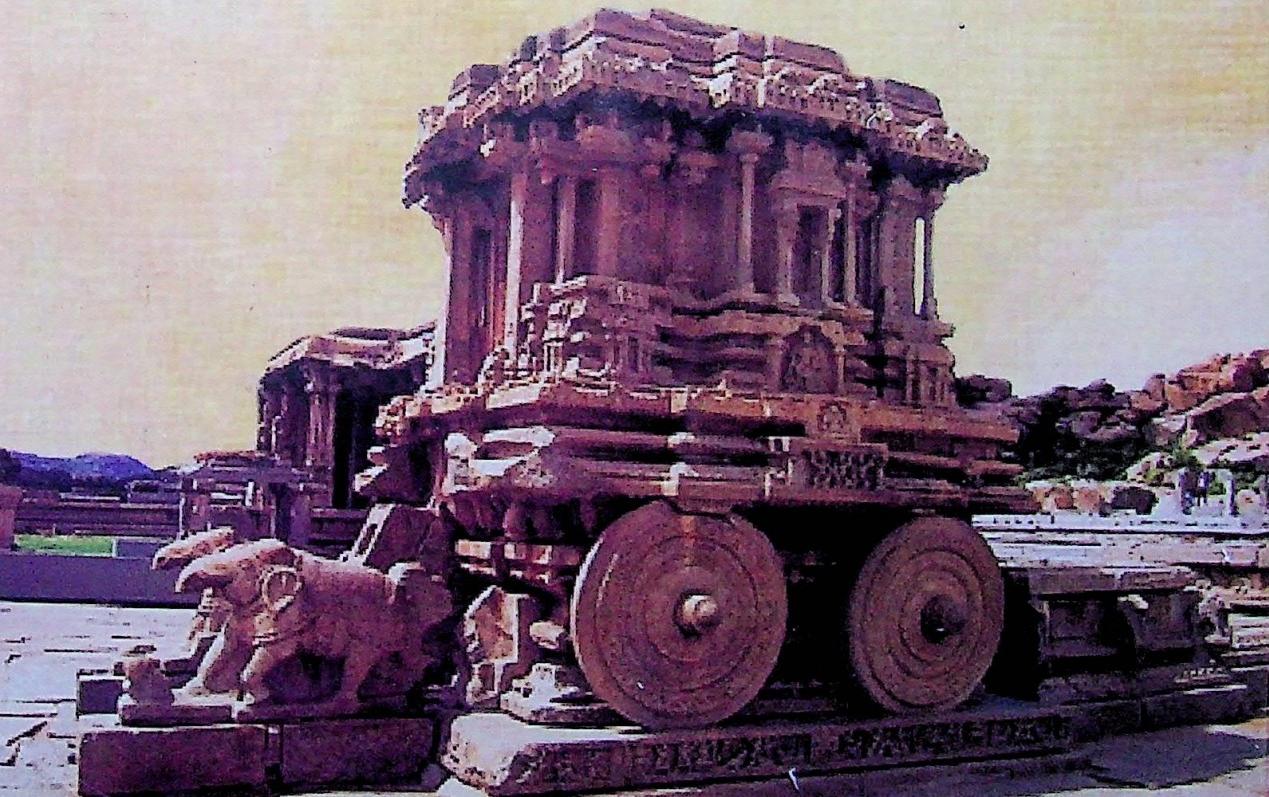


The India They Saw

Foreign Accounts : 8th-15th Centuries

Edited by
Meenakshi Jain



The classical accounts of Greek and Roman writers, and subsequently, the works of Chinese pilgrims portrayed the splendour of civilization in ancient India. By the seventh century, the world scenario had altered significantly with the advent of Islam and the attendant era of Arab expansion. The age of Arab travellers, geographers, merchants and historians commenced with the Islamic ascendancy.

India was then at a high point in her intellectual and cultural attainments. The Arabs transmitted knowledge of Indian numerals, mathematics, philosophy and logic, mysticism, ethics, statecraft, military science, medicine, astronomy and astrology to the outside world. Arab travellers described the grandeur and wealth of the kings of India, singling out for special mention the Palas, the Gurjara Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas.

Politically, while north India was being subjected to Arab and Turkish invasions which culminated in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in A.D. 1206, the south moved on a different trajectory. In the last quarter of the tenth century, the mighty Cholas on the Coromandel Coast replaced the Rashtrakutas as the paramount kings of India.

By A.D. 1200, the Chola kingdom had withered away. In A.D. 1336, was established the Vijayanagar kingdom, which stood as a bulwark against Muslim attacks from the north for over two centuries.

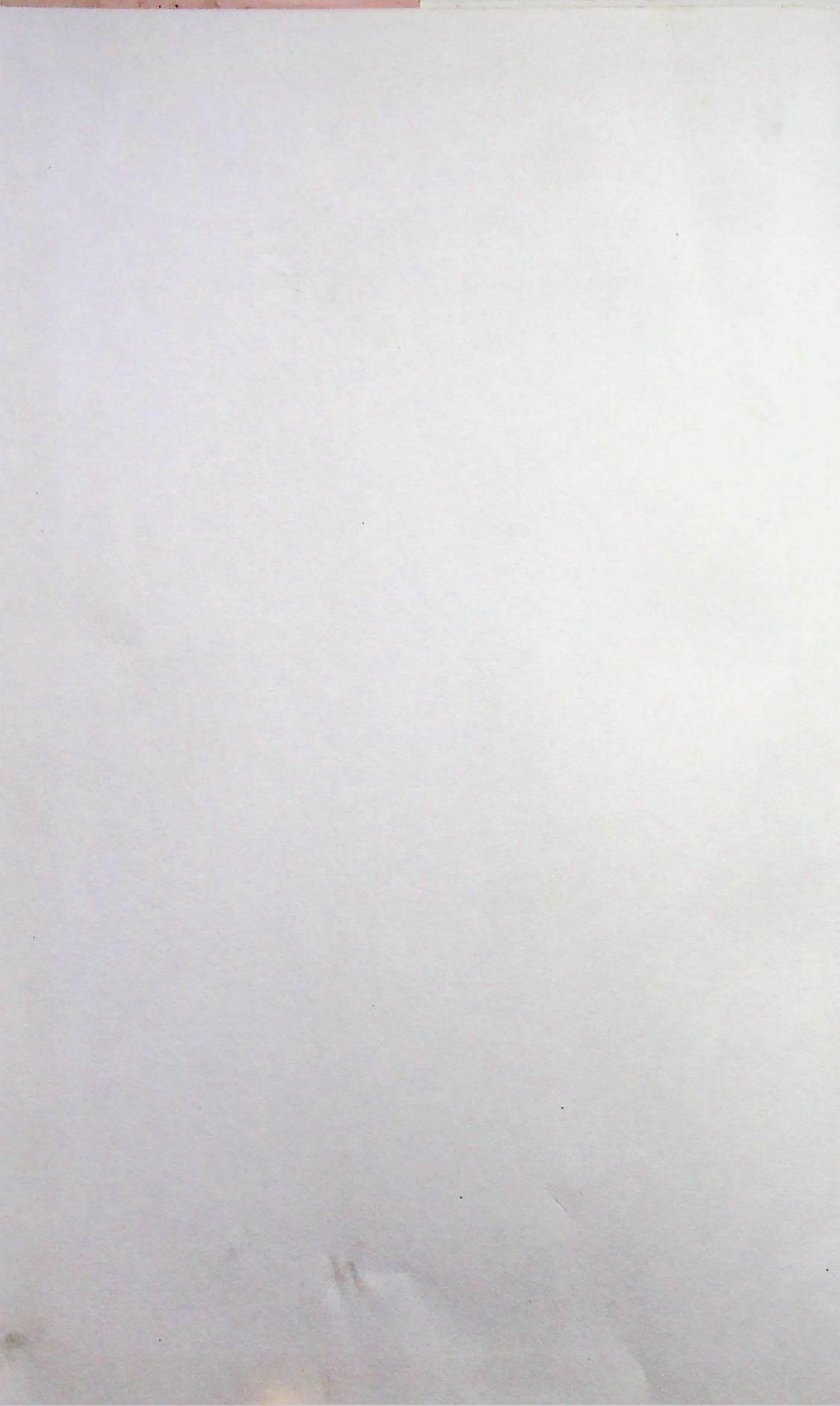
Meanwhile, several European missions and missionaries undertook the journey to China, visiting India en route, or on their return journey. European merchants took advantage of the land routes opened by the Mongol conquests and some of them managed to visit India.

Besides the works of European travellers, traders and merchants, several Chinese accounts of India are also available from the twelfth century.

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(Volume II)

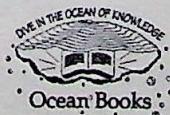


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Publisher's Note

In the year 2004, on returning from South East Asia, Nobel Prize recipient, Sir Vidia Naipaul requested us to arrange a meeting with a group of Delhi based thinkers to share the impressions of his visit. He was simply overwhelmed with what he saw in South East Asian countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia etc. We hurriedly, invited about twenty people to a get together with Sir Vidia. The meeting held on June 15, 2004 was attended by Sarva Shri Dinanath Mishra, Balbir Punj, Brij Kishore Sharma, Shankar Saran, Meenakshi Jain, Sandhya Jain, Ram Madhav, Devendra Swarup and some others. Sir Vidia described how he was astonished to see deep Indian cultural influence in the region not only in the past but even today. He felt sad that present day Indians appeared to have little recollection of the grandeur of their ancient civilization and its lasting contribution to the world civilization. He felt strongly that it would be a worth while endeavour to prepare a compendium of foreign perceptions of India down the ages.

During later discussions, it was decided that the project would cover the period from earliest times up to the mid-nineteenth century, the changed sensibility towards India thereafter consequent to the establishment of the British Colonial rule, being well known. The present volumes are the result of these deliberations.

We are thankful to Sandhya Jain and Meenakshi Jain for agreeing to take up the project despite their other professional commitments and completing it so meticulously. We are grateful to Prof. Devendra Swarup for having agreed to coordinate the project till its fruition. Sandhya Jain compiled and edited the material for the first volume, while Meenakshi Jain prepared the remaining three volumes. Both of them have recorded their experiences and impressions in detailed Introductions to their respective volumes separately.

We wish to place on record our heartfelt gratefulness to Sir Vidia for not only conceiving the project, but also for painstakingly going through volumes I

and III and making many valuable suggestions which the editors have attempted to incorporate. We feel indebted to Prof. Lokesh Chandra and Dr. B.M. Pande for their valuable contribution in the preparation of the first volume. We are highly grateful to Prof. Devendra Swarup, without whose continuous active guidance and involvement, this ambitious project would not have seen the light of the day.

We are conscious that many other compilations of foreign accounts on India are already available, but we do feel that this series of four volumes will add much to the present knowledge of our readers in this area and also pave the way for publication of many other volumes based on the first hand study of the original sources in foreign languages other than English as, it was painfully discovered during the preparation of these volumes that most of the material still lies untranslated into English, which is the only window available to most of the Indian Scholars. With this Note, we offer these volumes to our readers and cordially invite their comments and suggestions, which would help us to improve the quality of the later editions.

Introduction

The classical accounts of Greek and Roman writers, and subsequently, the works of Chinese pilgrims vividly portrayed the splendour of civilisation in ancient India. The last notable account of that era was by I-tsing, who visited the country towards the close of the seventh century.

The world scenario had by then altered significantly with the advent of Islam and the attendant era of Arab expansion. The Arabs conquered Baghdad in A.D. 634, Syria in A.D. 636, Persia between A.D. 636 and 650, Egypt in A.D. 642 and Carthage on the northern Africa coast in A.D. 698. In A.D. 711, they crossed the Gulf of Gibraltar and entered the Iberian Peninsula. The following year Sindh also came under their control. The string of conquests from Spain to India enabled the Arabs to link the two major economic units of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean and dominate all the important maritime and caravan routes.

As a consequence of Muslim dominance, direct links between Europe and the East ceased. Europe became pre-occupied with the threat of Islam and fought nine Crusades between A.D. 1096 and 1291, albeit without any notable success. During these centuries, Europe almost wholly lost sight of the East as 'a land of reality.' The Bible increasingly became the primary source of geographical knowledge. The term 'India' was used to denote the subcontinent, the East Indies, indeed everything in the distant East. Many legends grew in Europe about a Christian community and a Christian king in India, who would assist the Crusaders in the fight against Islam. Europe during those centuries had only a hazy and distorted picture of the India known to the Greeks and Romans.

The age of Arab travellers, geographers, merchants and historians commenced with the Islamic ascendancy. Many Arab merchants and travellers to India kept diaries of their journey, while others conveyed information to geographers who wrote valuable accounts of the country. Among the earliest diaries of that period was of the merchant Sulaiman, written around A.D. 851.

India was then at a high point in her intellectual and cultural attainments.

Masudi recorded the contemporary belief that 'wisdom (*hikma*) originally came from al-Hind.' The Arabs transmitted knowledge of Indian numerals, mathematics, philosophy and logic, mysticism, ethics, statecraft, military science, medicine, pharmacology, toxicology (works on snakes and poison), veterinary science, astronomy and astrology to the outside world. Games like chess and *chausar* were also taken from India. An Arab author from Andalusia referred to an Indian book on tunes and melodies. Indian fables and literary works found reflection in the *Thousand and One Nights*. The early Arab attempts to study Indian culture and social life were manifested in the works of Sulaiman, Ibn Khurdadbib, Masudi, among others. Even before his arrival in India, the celebrated Alberuni had some Indian works in his library, which were translated into Arabic under the Abbasid caliph, Al Mansur (754-775), and the Barmakid *vazirs* of Harun ar-Rashid. Among these were the *Brahmasiddhanta* and the *Panchatantra*. This tradition ended with Alberuni in the first quarter of the eleventh century.

Arab travellers described the grandeur and wealth of the kings of India, singling out for special mention the Palas, the Gurjara Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas. The Arab appellation for the Pala kingdom was 'the kingdom of Dharma,' after Dharmapala (r. 769-815), the greatest ruler of the dynasty. According to Arab accounts, Dharmapala possessed the largest armed force in the country, and was accompanied by as many as fifty thousand elephants when he went on war. The number of washermen in his army was reported to be an astounding ten to fifteen thousand. Arab writers relate that in the Pala country was woven a cotton cloth so fine that it could pass through a ring.

The Gurjara Pratiharas, the Al-Jurz of Arab writers, were depicted as the 'enemies of Islam' par excellence. They were said to possess a cavalry unrivalled by any other king of India. The Rashtrakutas, who ruled in the Deccan from about A.D. 743 to 974, were presented by Arab geographers as the greatest kings of al-Hind and the fourth greatest monarchs of the world.

Arab accounts also detailed the infinite variety of Indian products that had entered long distance trade. The importance of the trade in pepper was additionally testified by the growth of expatriate communities of Muslims, Jews and Christians on the Indian coast. Besides pepper, other items in demand included various kinds of ointments, medicinal substances, poisons, antidotes, perfumes, incense, ginger, aloe-wood, spikenard, camphor, cloves, nutmeg, sandalwood, musk, cinnamon, camphor, and rhinoceros horn. In Arabic, words of Indian origin were mostly for spices, medicines and perfumes.

In addition, precious stones and diamonds, elephant tusks, and textiles like silk, brocade, cotton and jute were valuable items of trade. India had early mastered the technique of fast dyeing from natural sources. Indian steel and metallurgical products like swords were also highly prized.

Politically, while north India was being subjected to Arab and Turkish invasions which culminated in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in A.D. 1206, the south moved on a different trajectory. In the last quarter of the tenth century, the Cholas on the Coromandel Coast (known as Mabar to the Arabs) replaced the Rashtrakutas as the paramount kings of India. The eminent rulers of that dynasty included Rajaraja (r. 985-1014) and his son Rajendra (r. 1014-1044). The Chola kingdom, based in the fertile Kaveri delta, also enjoyed proximity to the active sector of long-distance trade extending from southern India through Southeast Asia into South China. It was probably the desire to strengthen control over international trade that led Rajaraja to annex the northern part of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) between India and the regions to its east.

His successor, Rajendra, completed the conquest of Sri Lanka and thereafter dispatched a naval expedition against Srivijaya, a maritime trading kingdom in the island of Sumatra. The victory of the Chola fleet led to fifty years of Indian dominance over the Strait of Malacca, the vital sea passage between the Malayan peninsula and Indonesia, through which all trade to, and from, China was routed. By A.D. 1200, the Chola kingdom had withered away.

In A.D. 1336, was established the Vijayanagar kingdom, which stood as a bulwark against Muslim attacks from the north for over two centuries. It eventually became the largest empire ever created in South India. The capital city was a massive site; the defensive walls, intended to ward off invaders, overwhelmed viewers by their sheer scale. Recent research indicates that about 650 square kilometres were encircled by these walls. A cultural highlight was the nine-day Mahanavami festival associated with veneration of goddess Durga. In 1347, the Muslim Bahamani kingdom was also founded in the South.

Meanwhile, European leaders, still convinced they would receive assistance from the East in their struggle against Islam, began to view the ascendant Mongols as possible allies. They persisted in this belief despite Mongol depredations in Poland and Hungry in A.D. 1240. The Mongols had then refrained from attacking the heart of Christendom, possibly because of the death of their leader, Genghis Khan.

In 1245, from the Council of Lyons, Pope Innocent IV dispatched two embassies to Mongolia. A Franciscan, John of Plano Carpini, accompanied by the Polish Friar Benedict as interpreter, was to go to the headquarters of the Grand Khan through Poland and Russia. John was the first European to travel east of Baghdad and return to tell his tale.

Shortly after John commenced his journey, the Council of Lyons declared that missions should be undertaken to Mongolia as part of Christendom's efforts to win a powerful Asiatic ally against Islam. The sack of Baghdad by the Mongols, in 1258, strengthened Christian hopes for an anti-Islam alliance. By the mid-thirteenth century, two routes to the Mongol Empire were opened,

one in northern Europe through Poland, the other through Syria and the old trade routes of southwestern Asia.

The opening of the land routes between Europe and Mongolia was followed, in 1264, with the Mongol ruler, Kublai Khan, extending his sway over China south of the wall. That year he established his residence at Peking. Among his first visitors were the Venetian merchants, Nicolo and Maffeo Polo. Unable to satisfy Kublai Khan's curiosity about Europe, they returned as his emissaries with a request to the Pope to send a hundred learned men to Peking to instruct the Mongols about Europe. When the Polo brothers set out for Peking again in 1271, they were accompanied by Nicolo's young son, Marco.

Marco Polo passed through parts of India on his return journey home after seventeen years of stay in China. His visit marked the recommencement of direct contact between Europe and India after an interval of over a thousand years. Marco Polo found the commerce of India extending from the territories of Kublai Khan to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. He described the shore of India as abundant in nature's choicest products. The palm tree gave its milk in lieu of wine, the bread fruit tree afforded wholesome food, the betel nut and spices, everything to satisfy the palate was available in profusion.

Around this time, the Popes became interested in the prospects of conversion to Christianity of people in Central and Eastern Asia who had not embraced Islam. They urged zealous monks as well as traders to make their way through Tartar and Turkish countries to the Far East. Several monks indeed undertook the journey to China, visiting India en route, or on their return journey. Among them may be mentioned John of Monte Corvino (Italy), who was commissioned to carry the Gospel to the Grand Khan in 1289, and spent thirteen months in India. He foresaw a rich harvest of souls in India.

The Franciscan friar, Odoric of Pordenone (probably German or Bohemian in origin), also selected for apostolic duty in China, passed through western India in A.D. 1321. He described the cultivation of pepper and ginger in Malabar. He lived in China for at least three years and left a complete account of his travels.

Giovanni Dei Marignolli was the last of the Franciscan Papal envoys sent to China in the period of Mongol dominion. He reached China in 1342, stayed for three or four years, and sailed for India in 1346 or 1347. In A.D. 1368, with the overthrow of the Mongols in China, the curtain between China and Europe came down once again.

In A.D. 1321, Jordanus or Jordan (a French Dominican monk of Severac in south-west France) sought to establish a Catholic mission on the Malabar Coast in India. His account of India was the best produced in the Late Middle Ages.

By the mid-fourteenth century, Italian merchants, especially the Genoese,

were active in India and China. As early as 1224, a society for the promotion of trade with India had been established in Genoa. Information about Chinese silk and Indian spices was current in the mercantile world of Italy. The commercial revolution in the Mediterranean world from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries was accompanied by a steady increase in population in Europe and a consequent growth of the European market. The Crusades had given the people of southern Europe a commercial frontier in the eastern Mediterranean region.

The growing demand in Europe was accompanied by an enhanced purchasing power. European merchants were quick to take advantage of the land routes opened by the Mongol conquests. In the attempt to gain direct access to emporiums in Asia, the Genoese led the way. The Venetians had also established friendly relations with the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt. Thus, occasionally, Christian Italians were able to travel in Arab ships from the ports of Egypt and eastern Arabia to southern India. Among them was the Venetian merchant, Nicolo di Conti.

Besides the works of European travellers, several Chinese accounts of India are also available from the twelfth century.

This volume covers the period from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries. A general paucity of foreign works marks this epoch. In certain instances there are also problems in identifying the names and places mentioned in the accounts. The translation, too, appears faulty at times. Some statements are incredible and seem obvious exaggerations. Nonetheless, the accounts attest to Indian achievements in various fields like science, technology, architecture and crafts.

Select List of Travellers and Writers

(in chronological order)

Arab and Muslim writers

Sulaiman, the merchant, undertook several voyages to India and China during the first half of the ninth century. His travel diary, known as the *Akhbar us Sind wal Hind*, dated 851 AD, is the earliest by an Arab to have come down to us.

Jahiz (d. 864), a native of Basra, wrote a book exclusively on Indian religion which seems to have perished. Two of his *risalas* contain brief accounts on the religious practices and intellectual attainments of Indians.

Yaqubi (d. 900) was an officer in the Department of Correspondence under the Abbasids. He traveled widely and his universal history has a section on India.

Ibn al-Fakih (c. 902) was an Iranian geographer who wrote a five-volume work, the *Kitab ul Buldan*, an abridged version of which has survived. It contains valuable information on the social and economic life in the coastal regions of India.

Ibn Khurdadba (d. 911) attained high office under the Khalifas and employed his leisure times in geographical researches.

Abu Dulaf (d. 942), was an Arab poet and traveller, who visited Multan and the southern coast.

Buzurg bin Shahryar (10th century) as a ship captain used to sail from the ports of Iraq up to China. He recorded his experiences and those of other travellers in his work, *Ajaib ul Hind* (Marvels of India).

Abu Zaidul Hasan of Siraf (950) revised and supplemented the work of Sulaiman by reading and questioning travellers to those countries, among them Al Masudi.

Al Masudi visited nearly all the countries subject to Muslim rule and others besides. He said he travelled so far to the west (Morocco and Spain) that he forgot the east and so far to the east (China) that he forgot the west. He was among the most admired writers in Arabic. He died in A.D. 956.

Al Istakhri was a native of Istakhr or Persepolis, and traveled through the Muhammadan countries from India to the Atlantic Ocean, from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. He seems to have written in the mid tenth century (951).

Ibn Haukal was a native of Baghdad. He left Baghdad in A.D. 943 and after travelling to various lands under Muslim rule returned to the city in A.D. 968. The following year he went to Africa. He completed his work around A.D. 976 (or 989?).

Al Biruni, a native of Birun, near Khwarizm, was born around A.D. 970-1. He was an astronomer, geometrician, historian, and logician. He entered the services of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and accompanied him to India. He spent a long time in Hindustan, chiefly in the Punjab, and learnt the Sanskrit language. He acquired an intimate knowledge of Hindu philosophy, religion, customs and beliefs. He died in A.D. 1038-9.

Al Utbi was Secretary to Sultan Mahmud. His work covers the entire reign of Subuktigin and of Mahmud up to A.D. 1020.

Abul Fazl Al Baihaki covers the period till A.D. 1059. He gives a graphic account of roughly fifty years of history of the Ghaznavids, including personal interviews with Mahmud Ghaznavi.

Muhammad U'fi lived in the reign of Iltutmish and dedicated his work to his minister, Nizam ul Mulk Muhammad. He was born in Bukhara and appears to have been a traveller.

Al Idrisi was born in Morocco towards the end of the eleventh century. He travelled in Europe and eventually settled in Sicily at the court of Roger II, at whose instance he wrote his book on geography. In the preface of his work,

he cited the various authors he had consulted. Additional information was obtained from travellers, whose statements he compared and tested.

Ibn Asir, author of the *Kamilu-T Tawarikh*, was born in 1160 near Mosul. The work is a valuable account of the Ghaznavids and Ghorians. It contains few references to the Jats and interesting details on the Arab occupation of Sindh.

Hasan Nizami was born in Naishapur. Troubles in his native country led him to seek residence elsewhere. After a stay at Ghazni, he arrived in Delhi. He began his work in A. D. 1205, just a few months before the death of Muhammad Ghori. The history traces developments from the year A.D. 1191 till part of the reign of Iltutmish.

Alauddin Juwaini was a native of Juwain, in Khurasan. He accompanied his father in the train of the Mongol governor in Persia, Arghun, to pay respects to the new emperor Mangu Khan. He was appointed governor of Baghdad by Hulaku Khan. His history stops at A.D. 1257. Its objective was to perpetuate the memory of Mangu Khan.

Minhaj us Siraj's family originally hailed from Juzjan, the country between Merv and Balkh. Minhaj came from Ghor to Sindh, Uch and Multan in 1227 and to Delhi in 1228. He was appointed to various posts by Iltutmish and successive Sultans of Delhi. He wrote a general history from the earliest times to A.D. 1259.

Zakariya Al Kazwini was born in Kazwin in Persia. He was not a traveller but compiled his works from other writings which he cited. He wrote around A.D. 1263 or 1275.

Rashiddun's Jamiut Tawarikh was completed in A.D. 1310. It was really the work of Al Biruni who had written almost four centuries earlier.

Abdullah Wassaf, the great historian of Shiraz, begins his work with the death of Mangu Khan and covers developments till the year A.D. 1328. His work is highly rated as a history on the Mongol dynasty; it has some references to India, particularly politics in the Pandyan kingdom.

Abul Feda (1273-1331) was a Syrian prince, who wrote several books including a universal history down to A.D. 1329. His *Taqwin ul Buldan*, a descriptive geography, contains information on India.

Ibn Battuta (d. 1377) was a Moorish scholar, who arrived in India in 1333. He held several posts under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and travelled extensively in the country. He left in 1344.

Shihabuddin al Umari (of Damascus), in his *Masalik -ul Absar*, has provided a very important account of India in the fourteenth century. His work is based primarily on the accounts of reliable eye-witnesses. It provides valuable information about Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

al-Qalqashandi, an Egyptian scholar, based his work, the *Subh-ul Asha*, on information derived from the *Masalik -ul Absar*.

Sharafuddin Yazdi wrote a partial biography of Timur in A.D. 1424. As far as the Indian expeditions of Timur are concerned, it just embellishes the *Malfuzat-I Timuri*.

Abdur Razzak was the ambassador of Timur's son, Mirza Shah Rukh, to the Vijayanagar court in 1442.

Historians and histories of Sindh

The *Chach-Nama* deals with the usurpation of the Brahman Chach and the Arab conquest of Sindh. It was translated from the Arabic by Muhammad Ali in the time of Nasiruddin Kabacha. It is difficult to fix the precise period of the composition of the original text in Arabic. It appears to have been written before A.D. 753, when a significant section of the people were Buddhists.

Al Biladuri lived in the mid-ninth century at the court of Khalif Al Mutawakkal. He died around A.D. 892-93. His work contains an account of the first Arab conquests in Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, Armenia, Transoxiana, Africa, Spain and Sindh. His work is among the earliest Arab chronicles, and deals with events till A.D. 842. He does not appear to have visited Sindh, but cites the authors on whom he relied for information.

The unknown author of the *Majmalut Tawarikh* says that his father was the compiler of a historical work, and that he himself had written a history of the Barmekides. He informs us that he began his book in A.D. 1126. It covers events till A.D. 1193.

European travellers

Benjamin of Tudela (1159-73), a Spanish Jew, in the year 1159 or 1160

started from Tudela on a journey of thirteen or fourteen years during which he visited large parts of the known world.

Marco Polo, the celebrated Venetian, whose father and uncle had visited Central Asia between 1260 and 1271, started his journey in 1271. He reached the court of the Mongol, Kublai Khan after a hazardous journey of three and a half years. He stayed in China for 17 years and left in 1292. He visited parts of India on his way back home.

John of Monte Corvino (Italy) was the first of three monks who visited India soon after Marco Polo. John was a Franciscan friar who was sent as a missionary to China and subsequently appointed Archbishop of Peking by the Pope. He reached India in 1292 overland through Persia. From south India he crossed over to the Malay Peninsula and thence to Canton and Peking. He was the first European missionary to preach Christianity in India and China. With him begins the stream of Christian missionary criticism of Indian life and habits.

Odoric of Pordenone (probably German or Bohemian in origin and a friar of the Franciscan order), left home in 1316 to become a missionary in China. He went by sea from Italy to Trebizond on the coast of the Black Sea. From Ormuz he sailed to Salsette, near Bombay and reached Surat in about 1325. From Salsette he took a ship again to continue his journey to China. He sailed past the southern extremity of India to the vicinity of Madras, whence he crossed the Bay of Bengal to Sumatra and made his way past Java and Borneo till he reached China. He stayed in Peking for three years and returned to Europe through Tibet, Afghanistan, and Northern Persia.

Jordanus or Jordan, a French Dominican monk of Severac in south-west France, was sent by Rome to evangelize India in 1321. He was accompanied by three Italian friars and an Armenian lay brother. They followed the customary route by the Black Sea to Persia and the Persian Gulf, and thence to south-west India. According to his own statements, he was imprisoned four times in Muhammadan dungeons on the coast of India. His account of the Parsis is among the earliest by a foreigner.

Giovanni Dei Marignolli was sent by Pope Benedict XII with three other envoys to the great Tartar Khan then ruling China and Central Asia, and to the Christian princes of the Alan tribe of the Turks. After three years in Peking, they journeyed southwards down the coast of China in 1346 and around the Malay Peninsula to Southern India. Marignolli stayed at Kulam in Travancore for sixteen months.

Nicolo Di Conti, a Venetian merchant, who had resided for some time at Damascus, and acquired fluency in Arabic, started on a journey to the East about 1430, taking his wife with him. For greater security for himself and his family, Conti posed as a Muhammadan. He traveled across Northern Arabia to Baghdad, thence to the Persian Gulf. In Persia, Conti learnt Persian and adopted the Persian dress. He came with some Persian merchants to Cambay from where he visited the great city of Vijayanagar. He returned to Venice in 1444, after an absence of twenty-five years. He dictated his narrative to Poggio Bracciolini, Secretary to Pope Eugenius IV.

Geronimo de Santo Stefano, a Genoese, at the close of the 15th century (1494-9) proceeded to India by way of the Red Sea. He followed much the same route as Conti and repeated many of his observations.

Athanasius Nikitin, a Russian, travelled to Persia and then to Gujarat. He stayed at Bidar and provides a vivid description of the Bahamani kingdom. His account of Vijayanagar, which he did not visit, is based on second-hand information.

Chinese travellers

Chou Kiu-fei, writing in A.D.1178, gave a valuable account of China's trade with other countries.

Chau Ju-kua, an inspector of foreign trade, compiled his work about A.D.1225. He has provided one of the most valuable notices on the kingdoms of South India.

Wang Ta -Yuan, a Chinese merchant, was a contemporary of Ibn Battuta. He visited foreign countries for purposes of trade.

Ma Huan was a Chinese Muslim interpreter to the expedition of 1412-1413. His work was first published in 1451.

Cheng Ho, a eunuch, was a Mussalman and the son of a *hajji*. He was accompanied in his voyages by Fei Hsin, whose account dated 1436 has survived.

Ma Twan-lin wrote in the mid-thirteenth century.

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Chapter 1

Natural Wealth

- A. Some Descriptions of the Land
- B. Climate
- C. Flora and Fauna
- D. Precious Stones and Metals

A. SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LAND

1. Isidore of Seville on eastern geography [c. 638 A.D.]¹

India derives its name from the river Indus, by which it is enclosed on the West. It stretches out from the southern area to the rising of the sun, and it extends on the North as far as the Caucasus mountain. It has many nations, towns and also the land of Taprobane which is filled with elephants. It has (the islands of) Chryse and Argyra which are rich in gold and silver, and also (the island of) Tyle which is never wanting in foliage. It has both rivers Ganges and Indus and Hyphasis which make the Indian famous...

2. Comparison of India and China, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²

India is much more spacious than China and is twice the size of the latter and the numbers of its kings are more [than those of China]. But China is more populated. Date palm is neither found in China nor in India [?], but they have the rest of the trees and fruits which we do not have. In India there are no grapes, while in China it is found in small quantities, but other fruits are found in abundance. They have more pomegranates in India [than in China]...

The rivers in both the countries are all of huge sizes: some of these are larger than our rivers. Rainfall throughout the two countries is heavy. In India there are many deserts while China is entirely populated.

3. The country about Cape Comorin, Abu Zaidu-l Hasan of Sira³

Among the stories which are current in the country (of Zabaj) [Java] about ancient times, there is one concerning a king of Kumar, the country which produces the aloes called kumari. This country is not an island, but is situated (on the continent of India) on that side which faces the country of the Arabs.

4. Vast country, Al Masudi⁴

India is a vast country, extending over sea, and land, and mountains; it borders on the country of Zabaj [Java], which is the kingdom of the Maharaj, the king of the islands, whose dominions separate India and China, but are considered as part of India. India extends on the side of the mountains to Khurasan and Sind, as far as Tibet.

5. State of India, John of Monte Corvino in a letter written 22 December 1310⁵

The condition of the country of India aforesaid is this. The land is well enough peopled; and there be great cities therein, but the houses are wretched, being built of sandy mud, and usually thatched with leaves of trees. Hills there are few; rivers in some places are many, in others few. Springs there are few or none; wells in plenty; and the reason is this, that water is generally to be found at the depth of two or three paces, or even less. This well water is indeed not very good to drink, for it is somewhat soft and loosens the bowels; so they generally have tanks or excavations like ponds, in which they collect the rain water, and this they drink.

6. The Russian version of the letter reportedly sent by the Indian priest-king Prester John to the Greek ruler, Manuel Commenus, appeared in early thirteenth century. It was called, *The Story of the Indian Kingdom, of the great and famous state and all its wonders: how great its territory is, how many wonders and treasures there are and what its people, animals, birds and all sorts of jewels are like*⁶

[There were] wild elephants, unicorns, aurochs with golden horns, camels and all kinds of ferocious beasts...pepper grew there and there was a precious stone called emerald...an abundance of everything...[but] neither thief nor bandit nor envious person [were to be found].

7. Eulogium upon the Countries of Hind, Abdullah Wassaf⁷

India, according to the concurrent opinion of all writers, is most agreeable abode on the earth, and the most pleasant quarter of the world. Its dust is purer than air, and its air purer than purity itself; its delightful plains resemble

the garden of Paradise, and the particles of its earth are like rubies and corals...

It is related by sufficient informants, experienced travellers, who have long fixed their staff in the country of Hind and raised the standards of enquiry and research, that the length, breadth, and the number of its most celebrated provinces are as follows: Malibar, from the borders of Khor to the country of Kulam, is about 300 parasangs; that Bula, from the beginning of Kambayat to the borders of Malibar, is more than 400 parasangs; that Sawalik contains 125,000 cities and villages; and Malwa 1,893,000 towns and villages.

8. Cannot be compared with any other country, Shihabuddin al Umari⁸

This is a most important country which cannot be compared with any other country in the world in respect of its extensive territories, its abounding wealth and numerous armies, the grandeur of its Sultan [Muhammad bin Tughlaq] when he travels or is in residence and in respect of the might of his empire. The fame and renown of this country is well known.

...it is the country in whose seas there are pearls and in whose land there is gold, and in whose mountains there are rubies and diamonds, and in whose valleys there is aloe-wood and camphor, and in whose cities there are the thrones of the kings. Among its animals there are elephants and rhinoceros; from its iron are made the Indian swords; in it there are mines of iron, quick-silver and lead, and from some of its places there comes saffron, and in some of its valleys there are crystals; in it the good things of life are in abundance, prices here are cheap; its armies are numberless, and its territories are limitless.

9. Length of country three years by ordinary journey, Shihabuddin al Umari⁹

The learned and blessed Shaikh [Mubarak-Ibn-i-Mahmud al-Khambati]...says that this country is extremely extensive so that its length is three years by ordinary journey and its width is also three years, and its latitude is that which lies between *Somnat* and *Sarandib* [Ceylon] up to Ghazna and its longitude from the *Bay apposite to Aden* to the *Wall of Alexander* [the Great Wall of China] where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic Ocean. There are closely situated towns with *mimbars*, thrones and districts, villages, market-places and bazars. No desolated place comes between them...

10. Healthy country, Shihabuddin al Umari¹⁰

I say: The Qadi Nizamuddin Yahya bin-Hakim brought to my knowledge an old work on the country. In it is mentioned that the whole of Multan consists of 1,26,000 villages (recorded) in the Diwan. Multan and Delhi are

situated in the 3rd climate while the greater part of the country is situated in the 2nd and 3rd climates. It is a large country and is healthy except the rice growing fields. They are unhealthy and the low-lands are unwholesome. It is related in the same work that Mubarak b. Yusuf ath-Thaqafi obtained in Sind 40 *behar of gold*, every behar consisting of 333 *mann*. He said: From the countries of Ghazna and Qandhar (begin) the frontiers.

I inquired from Shaikh Mubarak about the mainland of India and the borderlands. He replied to me: in it there are about 1000 rivers, big and small, some of which resemble the Nile in length, others are smaller than it, others are still smaller and others are like the ordinary rivers. On the banks of the rivers are villages and cities and dense trees and verdant meadows...

11. Abundance of aromatic plants, *Subh-ul-A'sha*¹¹

The author of *Masalik ul Absar* [Ibn Fazullah ul-Umari]...says, “in their mountains and islands there grow the trees of aloes-wood and camphor and all sorts of aromatic plants e.g. clove tree, spikenard (sunbul), dar-chini, Cinnamon (girfa), salikha, cardamom (qaqullah), cubeb, mace and many kinds of drugs of vegetable origin (aqaqir). And they have musk deer and civet cat. This together with all that is found in this country is on account of the extensiveness of the provinces, the remoteness of the sides and the distance of its boundaries.

12. Boundaries of India, Abul-Fida, the fourteenth century Syrian prince-geographer¹²

India is surrounded on the west by the Sea of Fars and the rest of it are the borders of Sind and the parts adjacent to it; on the south it is surrounded by the Indian Ocean; on the east by a desert, which separates India from China; and on the north by (the lands of the Turkish clans).

13. Extensive areas, Marvazi¹³

Their lands are numerous, with extensive areas, and the outlying parts of them are far-flung, stretching as they are down to the limit of habitation where cultivation and procreation cease and the existence of animals comes to an end.

14. Wealth of India, Timur¹⁴

...the Prince Muhammad Sultan said: “The whole country of India is full of gold and jewels, and in it there are seventeen mines of gold and silver, diamond and ruby and emerald and tin and iron and steel and copper and quicksilver, etc., and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making wearing apparel, and aromatic plants, and the sugar cane, and it is a country which is always green and verdant, and the whole aspect of the country is

pleasant and delightful. Now, since the inhabitants are chiefly polytheists and infidels and idolaters and worshippers of the sun, by the order of God and his prophet, it is right for us to conquer them."

15. Ibn Majid, in a work dated 1489-90, on navigation which shows that Malaka was then in regular communication with India, Southern Arabia and the Red Sea¹⁵

As to what concerns the entry to Malaka while coming from Kalikut, sometimes the monsoon scatters the ships and sometimes carries them beyond it. The only exception is in the case of the well-armed ships coming from Campa, ready to set sail at the commencement of niruz or about that time. The monsoon brings back to Malaka ships from Hormuz and from Mekka and the late ships enter there (Malaka) on the 120th (day of niruz).

16. Pedro Covilham, who left Lisbon in May 1487 and was the first Portuguese to sail on the Indian Ocean on a Moorish ship and visit Cananore, Calicut and Goa, sent back the following report to King John¹⁶

That the ships which sailed down the coast of Guinea might be sure of reaching the termination of the continent, by persisting in a course to the south; and that when they should arrive in the eastern ocean, their best direction must be to inquire for Sofala, and the Island of the Moon [Madagascar].

17. Vasco da Gama comes in search of Christians and spices¹⁷

[Calecut] [Arrival.] That night [May 20] we anchored two leagues from the city of Calecut, and we did so because our pilot mistook *Capua*, a town at that place, for Calecut. Still further there is another town called *Pandarani*. We anchored about a league and a half from the shore. After we were at anchor, four boats (*almadias*) approached us from the land, who asked of what nation we were. We told them, and they then pointed out Calecut to us.

On the following day [May 21] these same boats came again alongside, when the captain-major sent one of the convicts to Calecut, and those with whom he went took him to two Moors from Tunis, who could speak Castilian and Genoese. The first greeting that he received was in these words: "May the Devil take thee! What brought you hither?" They asked what he sought so far away from home, and he told them that we came in search of Christians and of spices.

18. King Manuel, in a letter of July, 1499, relaying news of the Portuguese arrival in India to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, his recently acquired parents-in-law¹⁸

We learn that they did reach and discover India and other kingdoms and

lordships bordering upon it; that they entered and navigated its sea, finding large cities, large edifices and rivers, and great populations, among whom is carried on all the trade in spices and precious stones... Of these they have brought a quantity, including cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and pepper, as well as other kinds, together with the boughs and leaves of the same; also many fine stones of all sorts, such as rubies and others.

SOME REGIONS OF INDIA

1. The Laccadive and Maldives Islands, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*¹⁹

The third sea is the Sea of Harkandh [from Sanskrit *Harikeliya*, Bay of Bengal]. Between it and the Sea of Larvi there are numerous islands. It is said that they are one thousand and nine hundred islands, and they mark the boundaries of these two seas, namely Larvi [Lata for Gujarat] and Harkandh...

In these islands, ruled by the woman, coconut palms grow in abundance. The distance between one island and the other is two, three or four *farsakh*, and each one of these is inhabited by people and has coconut palms. Their wealth consists of cowry shells and the queen hoards them in her treasury... The cowry shell comes above the surface of water when it is alive; so a branch of the coconut palm is taken and thrown on the surface of the water, and the cowry shell clings to it. They call it *al-kastaj*.

2. Multan, Al Masudi²⁰

Multan is seventy-five Sindian parasangs from Mansura. Each parasang is eight miles. The estates and villages dependent on Mansura amount to three hundred thousand. The whole country is well cultivated, and covered with trees and fields.

3. Dabul [a famous seaport of Sind on the site of modern Karachi, named after a Buddhist temple *devalya*, destroyed by Muslims in A.D. 711], *Subh-ul-A'sha*²¹

Daybul: It is a city on the sea-shore situated in the second of seven climates... Ibn Sa'id says, "it lies on an entrance to the inland in the Bay of Sind and is the biggest and the most famous of the sea-ports of Sind and the articles of Daibul are exported from it." The author of *Taqwim ul-Buldan* mentions, that in it are found plenty of sesam...

4. Makran, Ibn Haukal²²

Makaran contains chiefly pasturages and fields, which cannot be irrigated on account of the deficiency of water.

5. Budha [Sind], Subh-ul-A'sha²³

Ibn Hauqal says, "it lies between the boundaries of Turan, Mukran and Multan and the cities of Mansura; it lies on the western side of the river Mihran. Its people have camels like the Bedouins; they live in huts and booths."

6. Janani [Sind], Ibn Battuta²⁴

After crossing the river of Sind called Panj Ab, our way led through a forest of reeds, in which I saw a rhinoceros for the first time. After two days' march we reached Janani, a large and fine town on the bank of the river of Sind. Its people are a people called the Samira [probably Rajput Sammas], whose ancestors established themselves there on the conquest of Sind in the time of al-Hajjaj [712 A.D.]. These people never eat with anyone, nor may anyone observe them while they are eating, and they never marry outside their clan.

7. Sehwan, Ibn Battuta²⁵

From Janani [Sind] we travelled to Siwasitan [Sehwan], a large town, outside which is a sandy desert, treeless except for acacias. Nothing is grown on the river here except pumpkins, and the food of the inhabitants consists of sorghum and peas, of which they make bread. There is a plentiful supply of fish and buffalo milk, and they eat also a kind of small lizard stuffed with curcuma.

8. Marvels of some places, Gardizi²⁶

The towns in which (*andar u*) these marvels are produced or found are situated from Quandahar (Gandhara) towards Kashmir, and also in (?) the province of Ganges (*Gang*). One of these towns is JALLANDHAR, in whose province is found much myrobalam, *terminalia bellerica*, *embilica officinalis*, and the *jashak* tree. The Indians say that a king of this country would live up to 250 years, while at any time he would ride, hunt, and have intercourse with women, just like young men, all this being due to medicines and wiles (*hila*)....

CHITRAKOT, which produces *shaytara yi hindi* while in its mountains there are numerous *jashak* trees and other things; here is the abode of the great men (nobles ?) and here their sages learn charms and every science. The towns UJJAYNI (*sic*) belongs to the worshippers of Mahakali and the astronomical tables of 'Arkand' were calculated from its longitude. In it are situated numerous repositories of books and wisdom.

9. Sindbad the Sailor's voyages may have been imaginary but were based on the knowledge of the Arabs of the time²⁷

Thence we sailed to the island of pepper and to the peninsular of Comorin,

in which is found the aloes wood, called *santy*. Thence we went to the pearl fisheries. I made a bargain with the divers, who brought me up a considerable number of beautiful pearls, and God heaped me with blessings...

10. Pearls in Malabar, Chau Ju-Kua²⁸

The Nan-p'i country [the country of Nairs, Malabar] is in the extreme south-west. From San-fo-ts'i one may reach it with the monsoon in a little more than a month. The capital of the kingdom is styled Mie-a-mo [Malabar], which has the same meaning as the Chinese expression *li-ssi* [priests]...

The climate is warm; there is no cold season. Rice, hemp, beans, wheat, millet, tubers and green vegetables supply their food; they are abundant and cheap...

The native products include pearls,...and *tou-lomien* (cotton cloth)...

11. Chinese come to trade in Nan-pi [Malabar], Ma Twan-lin²⁹

The inhabitants of Nan-pi are very warlike. They manage skillfully the saber and the lance. They are shrewd archers. They know to mint and strike silver coins with alloy which bear the royal seal of the State and which serve as currency for commerce. They fish for pearls and make cotton cloth of all colours. Because of its distance, this country lived without any relation with China, when two merchants who were natives of the land and who were called Chi-lo-pa-tchi-li-yu, father and son, came to establish themselves in the centre of the town of Tsiouen-tcheou (of Fo-kien). After this, many Chinese vessels took the route to Nan-pi in order to carry on trade.

12. Quilon - land of spices, Rabbi Benjamin Of Tudela³⁰

The pepper grows in this country; the trees which bear this fruit are planted in the fields, which surround the towns, and everyone knows his plantation. The trees are small and the pepper is originally white, but when they collect it, they put it into basins and pour hot water upon it; it is then exposed to the heat of the sun and dried in order to make it hard and more substantial; in the course of which process it becomes of a black colour. Cinnamon, ginger and many other kinds of spices also grow in this country.

13. Malabar, Abulfeda³¹

All Malabar is covered with forest and with trees entangling one another, thanks to the abundance of water. From Hannaur [Honavar] one goes to Basarour (Barcelore), a small place; beyond it, one comes to Manjarur (Mangalore), one of the largest towns of Malabar. Its king is an infidel. Manjarur is to the East of the localities already mentioned. After a three days' journey from Manjarur, one comes across a big mountain which projects into

the sea and is seen by sailors from a distance; it is called Ra's Haili (promontory of Illy). At the extremity of Malabar we have Tandiyur, a small place to the east of Ra's Haili, and there we find many gardens. The other localities of Malabar are Schaliyat (Jaliat) and Schinkili. One of these places is inhabited by Jews, but the narrator has omitted to note which. Kaulam is the last town of Malabar, the pepper country.

Cape Comorin

The first locality in the Coromandel from the side of Malabar is Ra's Komhori (Cape Comorin), mountain and town. Another town of Coromandel, Manifattanis, situated on the coast. The capital of Coromandel is Biyyardawal. It is the residence of the Sultan of Coromandel. Horses are brought to him from other countries.

Coromandel [Ma'bar]

The Coromandel, says Ibn Said, is celebrated by the reports of travellers. It is from there that they export muslin which has passed into proverb for its fitness. To the north lie the mountains adjacent to the country of Balhara, who is one of the kings of India; to the west the river of Suliyan falls in the sea. The Coromandel is three or four days' journey to the East of Caoulem. I should add that this ought to be with an inclination toward the south.

Caoulem [Kaulam]

Caoulem, says Ibn Said, is the last town in the pepper country towards the east. One sets sail from this town in order to go to Aden. A traveller has told me that Caoulem is a town situated on a gulf at the very end of the pepper country and that it includes a quarter for the Mussalmans and a Mosque. The town is built on a Sandy Plain. The orchards there are always numerous. One notices the *boqqam* tree (Brazil) which looks like a pomegranate and whose leaf is like that of a Jujube tree.

14. Calicut, Girolamo Sernigi, the Florentine merchant, in a letter to a colleague in Florence in July 1499³²

[Calicut is] bigger than Lisbon, and peopled by Christian Indians...[The Zamorin of Calicut] keeps regal state...[The vessels in the harbour] carry neither arms nor artillery...in payment they [the Calicut merchants] only take gold and silver; coral and other merchandise of our parts they esteem but little...

15. Abundant Gujarat, Abdullah Wassaf³³

Gujarat, which is commonly called Kambayat, contains 70,000 villages and towns, all populous, and the people abound in wealth and luxuries. In the

course of the four seasons of the year seventy different species of beautiful flowers grow within that province. The purity of its air is so great that if the picture of an animal is drawn with the pen, it is life-like. And it is another matter of wonder that many plants and herbs are found wild and uncultivated there. You may always see the ground full of tulips even in the winter season. The air is healthy and the earth picturesque, neither too warm nor too cool, but in perpetual spring. The winter cultivation is brought about only through the moistness of dew, called *barasi*. When that harvest is over they begin summer cultivation, which is dependent upon the influence of the rain. The vineyards in this country bring forth blue grapes twice a year; and the strength of the soil is so great that the cotton plants spread their branches like willows and plane trees, and yield produce for several years successively.

Had the author full leisure to express fully the circumstances of that country, and to ascertain them from trustworthy men and historians, and to devote a long period of his life to explain them, still he would not be able to record even a portion of the marvels and excellences of that country.

16. Incomparable Kashmir, Timur³⁴

Kashmir is an incomparable country...In the midst of that country there is a very large and populous city called Naghaz. The rulers of the country dwell there. The buildings are very large and are all of wood, and they are four or five stories high. They are very strong and will stand for 500 or 700 years. A large river runs through the middle of this city, as large as the Tigris at Baghdad, and the city is built upon both sides of it. The source of this river is within the limits of Kashmir in a large lake, some *parasangs* in length and breadth, which is called Vir-nak. The inhabitants have cast bridges over the river in nearly thirty places. These are constructed of wood, stone, or boats; seven of the largest are within the city, and the rest in the environs...

17. Bengal – a hell full of good things, Ibn Battuta³⁵

This is a vast country, abounding in rice, and nowhere in the world have I seen any land where prices are lower than there; on the other hand it is a gloomy place, and the people of Khurasan call it "A hell full of good things." I have seen fat fowls sold there at the rate of eight for a single dirham, young pigeons at fifteen to the dirham, and a fat ram sold for two dirhams. I saw too a piece of fine cotton cloth, of excellent quality, thirty cubits long, sold for two dinars, and a beautiful slave-girl for a single gold dinar, that is, two and a half gold dinars in Moroccan money. The first city in Bengal that we entered was Sudkawan [Satgaon or Chittagong], a large town on the coast of the great sea. Close by it the river Ganges, to which the Hindus go on pilgrimage, and the river Jun [Jumna, here obviously the Brahmaputra] unite and discharge together

into the sea. They have a large fleet on the river, with which they make war on the inhabitants of the land of Laknawti.

18. Among the early Spaniards to write a travel narrative of India was an anonymous Franciscan monk who in the mid-fourteenth century wrote *Book of the knowledge of all the Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordships That Are in the World*³⁶

It contains extensive lands, very rich and populous. The cities I came to were nine, called *Noncla* and *Chequimo*, *Demonela*, *Coximocha*, *Granbaet*, *Ganarrac*, *Mahobar*; *Gomar* and *Colon*. Know that in this kingdom...the pepper and ginger and aloe ripen, and many other spices, of which there are great harvests which are taken over all the world.

They call this province India the sandy [Sind and Rajputana], and the colour of the people is black. They use Turkish bows. They are wise people with good memories, and learned in all kinds of knowledge. The device of the King is a white flag with a gold pale.

I departed from the kingdom of *Dilini* and entered that of *Viguy* [Vijayanagar?] which is on the other coast of the Indian Sea. It is a very rich land, well supplied with all good things. The cities which I visited in the kingdom of *Viguy* were *Panona*, *Framisia*, *Tusi*, *Artillo*, *Corsa*, *Rusna*, *Armonea*, *Androuar*, *Moncaspi*, and *Pascar*.

...This kingdom of *Scim* [the India beyond the Ganges], is in India the high, which borders on the eastern sea. And from this kingdom of *Scim* comes the great mountain *Caucasum* which extends from the eastern sea to India the low. The kingdom of *Trimic* [Tibet] is all surrounded by mountains which give rise to many fountains and rivers. This land has a very healthy climate...so that those who are born and live here have very long lives.

RIVERS AND SEAS

1. The Mihran [Indus] river in Sind, Al Masudi³⁷

The river Mihran takes its course through the country of Mansura, and falls near Debal into the Indian Ocean. In the bays of this sea there are many crocodiles, as in the bay of Sindabur in the kingdom of Baghara [Balhara], in India; the bay of Zabaj, in the dominions of the Maharaj, and the gulfs of the aghyab [aghbab], which extend towards the island of Sarandib [Ceylon]. Crocodiles live more particu-larly in sweet water, and, as we have said, in the estuaries of India, the water of which is for the most part sweet, because the streams which form them are derived from the rains.

2. The Sea of India, John of Monte Corvino³⁸

The state of things in regard to the Sea of India is this. The sea aboundeth greatly with fish; and in some parts of it they fish for pearls and precious stones. The havens are few and bad; and you must know that the sea here is the Middle Sea or Ocean. Traversing it towards the south there is no continent found but islands alone, but in that sea the islands are many, more than 12,000 in number. And many of these are inhabited, and many are not...

The shores of the said sea in some places run out in shoals for 100 miles or more so that ships are in danger of grounding. And they cannot make the voyage but once a year, for from the beginning of April till the end of October the winds are westerly, so that no one can sail towards the west; and again 'tis just the contrary from the month of October till March. From the middle of May till the end of October the wind blows so hard that ships which by that time have not reached the ports whither they are bound, run a desperate risk, and if they escape it is great luck. And thus in the past year there perished more than sixty ships; and this year seven ships in places in our own immediate neighbourhood, whilst of what has happened elsewhere we have no intelligence.

3. Meghna River, Ibn Battuta³⁹

I journeyed to Habanq, an exceedingly large and beautiful city, traversed by the river, which descends from the Kamaru mountains. This river is called the Blue River, and is used by travellers to Bengal and Lakanwati. On its banks there are water wheels, orchards, and villages to right and to left, like the Nile in Egypt. Its people are infidels under Muslim rule, who are mulcted of half their crops and pay taxes over and above that. We traveled down the river for fifteen days between villages and orchards, just as if we were going through a bazaar. There are innumerable vessels on it and each vessel carries a drum; when two vessels meet, each of them beats its drum and they salute one another.

B. CLIMATE

1. Winter in India, Al Masudi⁴⁰

Anyone who passed winter in India during the season when we have summer in our country, it is said, 'so and so passed winter (*yassara*) in India.'

2. Climate of Mabar, John of Monte Corvino⁴¹

In India it is always warm, and there never is any winter; yet the heat is not extravagant. And the reason is, that there be at all times winds which temper the heat of the air. And the reason why there can be no winter is the position of the country with respect to the zodiac, as I shall now tell. That is to say, the

sun when entering *Virgo*, i.e. on the 24th day of August, sends down his rays, as I have seen and in particular noted with my own eyes, quite perpendicularly, so as to cast no shadow on either side. And in like manner when he is entering *Aries*, i.e. at the end of March. And when he has gone through *Aries* he passes onwards the north, and casts shadows towards the south until...[the summer solstice] and then turns to *Virgo*, and after he has past through the sign of *Virgo* he then casts his shadow towards the north. And thus there is never so great an elongation of the sun as to admit of cold, and there are not two seasons. Or, as I have said before, there is no winter or cold season.

3. Climate temperate, Shihabuddin al Umari⁴²

India has a temperate climate, the conditions of the seasons of which do not much change. It is neither extremely hot nor cold as if all the time were spring. In this (country) wind and pleasant zephyr gently blow. The rains fall continually for a period of four months, mostly towards the end of spring till the beginning of summer.

4. Heat 'perfectly horrible' in India the Less [includes Sindh, and probably Makran and India along coast as far as some point immediately north of Malabar], Friar Jordanus⁴³

The days and nights do not vary there more than by two hours at the most...The heat there is perfectly horrible, and more intolerable to strangers that it is possible to say.

5. Days and nights are almost equal in India the Greater [extends from Malabar eastwards], Friar Jordanus⁴⁴

In this Greater India, in the place where I was, the nights and days are almost equal, nor does one exceed the other in length at any season by so much as a full hour. In this India the sun keeps to the south for six months continuously, casting the shadows to the north; and for the other six months keeps to the north, casting the shadow to the south. In this India the Polestar is seen very low, insomuch that I was at one place where it did not show above the earth or the sea more than two fingers' breadth.

There the nights, when the weather is fine and there is no moon, are, if I err not, four times as clear as in our part of the world. There also, if I err not, between evening and morning, often all the planets may be seen; there are seen their influences (as it were) eye to eye, so that 'tis a delightful thing there to look out at night!'

From the place aforesaid is seen continually between the south and the east a star of great size and ruddy splendour, which is called Canopus, and which from these parts of the world is never visible. There are many marvelous

things in the cycle of those (heavenly bodies) to delight a good astronomer.

6. A hot land, anonymous Franciscan monk of the *Book of the knowledge of all the Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordships That Are in the World*⁴⁵

[Speaking of Scim, the India beyond the Ganges] Beyond these are the people of India who are near the equinoctial line. Their land is very hot. Most of their towns are on the sea shore and there are many islands. So that the air receives moisture from the sea, and tempers the dryness and heat. In this way are formed beautiful bodies and graceful forms, with fine hair; which are not produced by the heat except that it produces dark colour. India the high is bounded by the eastern sea which is called Mare Sericum or Mare Cansatus.

7. Climate in Cochin, Ma Huan⁴⁶

In this country there are two seasons, the wet and the dry. In the first two months of the rainy season there are only passing showers, during which time the people lay in a stock of provisions: in the next two months there is a continual downpour day and night, so that the streets and market places are like rivers, and no one is able to go out of doors; during the last two months the rain gradually ceases, and then not a drop falls for another six months. The soil is unproductive, pepper, however, grows on the hills and is extensively cultivated; this article is sold at five taels the Po-ho which is 400 cattis of Chinese weight.

C. NATURE'S BOUNTY – FLORA AND FAUNA

FLORA

1. Coconut wine in the Nicobar Islands, Sulaiman⁴⁷

...if it is drunk soon after it is extracted from the coconut tree, it is as sweet as honey, but if it is left for an hour it turns into wine, and if it is left for several days it turns into vinegar.

2. Trees at Mansura, Abu Ishak al Istakhri⁴⁸

The date tree and the sugar cane grow here. The land of Mansura also produces a fruit of the size of the apple, which is called Laimun [sour lemon], and is exceedingly sour. The land also produces a fruit called Ambaj (mango), which is like the peach. The price of them is low, and they are plentiful.

3. A wide variety of trees, John of Monte Corvino⁴⁹

And they have trees which produce fruit continually, so that on them

you find fruit in every stage up to perfect ripeness at one time. In like manner they sow and reap at almost all seasons, and this because it is always warm and never cold. Aromatic spices are to be had good cheap, some more so and some less so, according to what spices they be. They have trees that produce sugar, and others that produce honey, and others that produce a liquor that has a smack of wine. And this the natives of those countries use for drink. And those three things are to be had at very small cost. And the pepper plant is here also. It is slender and knotty like a vine; and indeed 'tis altogether very like a vine, excepting that it is more slender, and bears transplanting.

Ginger is a reedlike plant, and, like a cane-root, it can be dug and transplanted. But their canes here are more like trees, being sometimes a cubit in girth and more, with slender prickly branches round about, and small leaves.

The Brazil tree is a slender lofty and thorny tree, all red as it were, with leaves like fern. The Indian nuts are as big as melons, and in colour green like gourds. Their leaves and branches are like those of the date tree.

The cinnamon is of a medium bulk, not very high, and in trunk, bark, and foliage, is like the laurel; indeed, altogether it resembleth the laurel greatly in appearance. Great store of it is carried forth of the island which is hard-by Maabar [among the earliest references to the Ceylon cinnamon trade].

4. Many kinds of grains and fruits, Shihabuddin al Umari⁵⁰

In it are many kinds of grains, wheat, rice, barley, peas, lentils, mash [Indian peas], lobiya [haricot] and sesame. As regards broad beans (ful), they are hardly found there. I say I think the absence of broad beans is due to the fact that it is a country of philosophers and according to them the beans spoil the essence of the intellect. Therefore, the Sabeans too have forbidden the use of them. He said: In it there are fruits; figs, grapes, plenty of pomegranates, sweet, sour and acid, bananas, peaches citron, lemon, lime, orange, sycamore, black mulberries which are called 'firsad', water-melon (Khiyar), yellow and green cucumber (qiththa) and melon. Figs and grapes are found in smaller quantities than the other fruits. As regards the quince it is found there and (also) imported to this (country). As regards pears and apples they are still rarer than quince. There are other fruits which are not known in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq; mangoes and mahwal and laha and naqhzak and other excellent and delightful fruits. As regards the coconut which is called 'Indian nut' no other thing can be compared to it and it is green and full of oil. As regards the *hammar*, it is called the 'Indian Tamarind.' It is a wild tree growing in abundance on the mountains. Coconut and bananas are less plentiful in Delhi than in neighbouring provinces where they are found in large quantities. Sugarcane is generally found in plenty throughout the country. One of it is of a black variety which is bad as regards its cane. It is the best (variety) for

chewing but not for crushing; it is not found elsewhere. From other varieties sugar is prepared in large quantities and is cheap as candy and the ordinary sugar. But it does not crystalise and is rather like white flour.

According to the report of Sheikh Mubarak bin Muhammad Shadhan there are in this country twenty-one varieties of rice. They have also turnips, carrots, pumpkin (vegetable marrow), badinjan (egg plant), asparagus, and ginger. They cook it when it is still green in the same manner as the carrot is cooked and it has an exquisite taste with which nothing can be compared. And there is also garden-beet, onion (garlic fum), fennel, thyme, and sweet smelling plants as rose, water-lily, violet, ban (nutmeg), and this is the same as Khallaf. Egyptian willow, narcissus, and this is (also called) abbar, narcissus, Jesamine, henna plant and this is faghiya. Similarly there is sesame oil and they use it for lighting purposes.

As regards olives they are obtained only by import. Honey is extremely abundant. Wax is only found in the palaces of the Sultan and its use is not allowed to anybody.

5. Trees and fruits in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁵¹

In the entrance to India the Less are (date) palms, giving a great quantity of the sweetest fruit; but further on in India they are not found... There be always fruits and flowers there, divers trees, and fruits of divers kinds; for (example) there are some trees which bear very big fruit, called *chaqui* [jackfruit]; and the fruit is of such size that one is enough for five persons.

There is another tree which has fruit like that just named, and it is called Bloqui, quite as big and as sweet but not of the same species. These fruits never grow upon the twigs, for these are not able to bear their weight, but only from the main branches, and even from the trunk of the tree itself, down to the very roots.

Mango

There is another tree which has fruit like a plum, but a very big one which is called Aniba [mango]. This is a fruit so sweet and delicious as it is impossible to utter in words.

There be many other fruit trees of divers kinds, which it would be tedious to describe in detail...

Coconut

First of these is a certain tree called *Nargil* [cocoanut]; which tree every month in the year sends out a beautiful frond like (that of) a (date), palm-tree, which frond or branch produces very large fruit, as big as a man's head. There often grow on one such stem thirty of those fruits as big as I have

said. And both flowers and fruits are produced at the same time beginning with the first month and going up gradually to the twelfth; so that there are flowers and fruit in eleven stages of growth to be seen together. A wonder! And a thing which cannot be well understood without being witnessed. From these branches and fruits is drawn a very sweet water. The kernel (at first) is very tender and pleasant to eat; afterwards it waxeth harder still, an oil is made from it of great medicinal virtue. And if anyone careth not to have fruit, when the fruit-bearing stem is one or two months old he maketh a cut in it, and bindeth a pot to this incision; and so the sap, which would have been converted into fruit, drops in; and it is white like milk, and sweet like must, and maketh drunk like wine, so that the natives do drink it for wine; and those who wish not to drink it so, boil it down to one-third of its bulk, and then it becometh thick, like honey; and 'tis sweet, and fit for making preserves, like honey and the honeycomb. One branch gives one potful in the day and one in the night, on the average throughout the year; thus five or six pots may be found hung upon the same tree at once. With the leaves of this tree they cover their houses during the rainy season. The fruit is that which we call *nuts of India*; and from the rind of that fruit is made the twine with which they stitch their boats together in those parts.

Palmyra

There is another tree of a different species, which like that gives all the year round a white liquor pleasant to drink, which tree is called *Tari* [*tadi*]. There is also another, called *Belluri*, giving a liquor of the same kind, but better.

Banyan

There be also many other trees, and wonderful ones; among which is one which sendeth forth roots from high up, which gradually grow down to the ground and enter it, and then wax into trunks like the main trunk, forming as it were an arch; and by this kind of multiplication one tree will have at once as many as twenty or thirty trunks beside one another, and all connected together. 'Tis marvelous! And truly this which I have seen with mine eyes, 'tis hard to utter with my tongue. The fruit of this tree is not useful, but poisonous and deadly. There is (also) a tree harder than all, which the strongest arrows can scarcely pierce.

The trees in this India, and also in India the Greater, never shed their leaves till the new ones come.

To write about the other trees would be too long a business; and tedious beyond measure; seeing that they are many and divers, and beyond the comprehension of man...

Ginger

In this India there is green ginger, and it grows there in great abundance.

There be also sugarcanes in quantities; carobs also, of such size and bigness that it is something stupendous. I could tell very wonder-ful things of this India; but I am not able to detail them for lack of time. Cassia fistula [an inferior cinnamon] is in some parts of this India extremely abundant...

There is no pepper there, nor any kind of spice except ginger.

6. Spices in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁵²

In this India there are pepper and ginger, cinnamon, brazil [sappan-wood], and all other spices.

Ginger is the root of a plant which hath leaves like a reed. Pepper is the fruit of a plant something like ivy, which climbs trees, and forms grape-like fruit like that of the wild vine. This fruit is at first green, then when it comes to maturity it becomes all black and corrugated as you see it. 'Tis thus that long pepper is produced, nor are you to believe that fire is placed under the pepper, nor that it is roasted, as some will lyingly maintain.

Cinnamon is the bark of a large tree which has fruit and flowers like cloves.

7. World's pepper produced in Quilon, John De Marignolli⁵³

And sailing on the feast of St. Stephen, we navigated the Indian sea until Palm Sunday, and then arrived at a very noble city of India called *Columbum*, where the whole world's pepper is produced. Now this pepper grows on a kind of vines, which are planted just like in our vineyards. These vines produce clusters which are at first like those of the wild vine, of a green colour, and afterwards are almost like bunches of our grapes, and they have a red wine in them which I have squeezed out on my plate as a condiment. When they have ripened, they are left to dry upon the tree, and when shrivelled by the excessive heat the dry clusters are knocked off with a stick and caught upon linen cloths, and so the harvest is gathered.

These are things that I have seen with mine eyes and handled with my hands during the fourteen months that I stayed there. And there is no roasting of the pepper, as authors have falsely asserted, nor does it grow in forests, but in regular gardens; nor are the Saracens the proprietors but the Christians of St. Thomas. And these latter are the masters of the public steel-yard, from which I derived, as a perquisite of my office as Pope's legate, every month a hundred gold *fan*, and a thousand when I left.

8. Hili – “impossible to state the number of plants which cover the hills,” Wang Ta-Yuan⁵⁴

This country is between Hsiao Ku-nan (Kain Colan) and Ku-li-fo (Calicut) [Mt. Ely is actually north of Calicut], it is also known (to the Chinese) as the Hsiao Chiang- keou, or ‘Little Harbour.’ The hill is bare and flat, it extends over several thousand (*sic*) *li*.

The dwellings of the people are scattered about close together on every side with a sufficiency of land to supply the wants of each family, though the soil is far from good for tilling...

The natural products are pepper, superior to that of any other foreign port. It is impossible to state the number of plants which cover the hills (of Hsia-li). It is a creeper which grows like a wistaria vine, and which blooms in winter and bears fruit in summer. The people gather it and dry it in the sun to remove its pungent flavour. The pepper gatherers for the most part do not mind its flavour, but if they do, they get relief by using a decoction of *Ch’uan-hsiung*. The pepper of all other foreign parts is all the surplus product of this county.

9. The Loahc tree, Odoric of Pordenone⁵⁵

In this country there are trees which give wine which they call *loahc* and which is very intoxicating.

10. Pepper in Malabar, Odoric of Pordenone⁵⁶

And now that ye may know how pepper is got, let me tell you that it groweth in a certain empire whereunto I came to land, the name whereof is Minibar [Malabar], and it groweth nowhere else in the world but there. And the forest in which the pepper groweth extendeth for a good eighteen days' journey, and in that forest there be two cities, the one where of is called Flandrina [Bandiranah, sixteen miles north of Calicut] and the other Cyngilin [Shinkali, port next below to Calicut]...

Now, in this country they get the pepper in this manner. First, then, it groweth on plants which have leaves like ivy, and these are planted against tall trees as our vines are here, and bear fruit just like bunches of grapes; and this fruit is borne in such quantities that they seem like to break under it. And when the fruit is ripe it is of a green colour, and 'tis gathered just as grapes are gathered at the vintage, and then put in the sun to dry. And when it is dried it is stored in jars [and of the fresh pepper also they make a confection, of which I had to eat and plenty of it]...At the extremity of that forest, towards the south, there is a certain city which is called Polumbum, in which is grown better ginger than anywhere else in the world. And the variety and abundance of wares for sale in that city is so great that it would seem past belief to many folk.

11. Ginger at Pacamuria and Helly, Nicolo Conti⁵⁷

Proceeding onwards he sailed [from Cambay] for the space of twenty days, and arrived at two cities situated on the sea shore, one named Pacamuria, and the other Helly. In these districts grows ginger, called in the language of the country *beledi*, *gebeli*, and *neli*. It is the root of a shrub, which grows to the height of two cubits, with great leaves, similar to those of the blue lilies called *Iris*, with a hard bark. They grow like the roots of reeds, which cover the fruit. From these the ginger is obtained, on which they cast ashes and place it in the sun for three days, in which time it is dried.

12. The palm tree at Cahila, Nicolo Conti⁵⁸

Beyond this city [of Mylapore] there is another, which is called Cahila, where pearls are found. Here also there grows a tree which does not bear fruit, but the leaf of which is six cubits in length and almost as many broad, and so thin that when pressed together it can be held in the closed hand [the palmyra tree]. These leaves are used in this country for writing upon instead of paper, and in rainy weather are carried on the head as a covering to keep off the wet. Three or four persons travelling together can be covered by one of these leaves stretched out.

13. The jack tree in Malabar, Nicolo Conti⁵⁹

A tree grows here in great abundance, the trunk of which produces fruit resembling the pineapple, but so large as to be lifted with difficulty by one man; the rind is green and hard, but yields nevertheless to the pressure of the finger. Within are from two hundred and fifty to three hundred apples, resembling figs, very sweet to the taste, and which are separated from each other by follicles. They have a kernel within, resembling the chesnut in hardness and flavour, flatulent, and which is cooked in the same manner as the chesnut; when thrown upon live embers, unless previously incised somewhat, it bounces up with a crackling noise. The external bark is used as provender for cattle [the jack tree]. The fruit of this tree is sometimes found under the earth in its roots; these excel the others in flavour; and for this reason it is the custom to set these apart for royal use. This fruit has no kernel. The tree is like a large fig tree, the leaves being intercised like those of the palm: the wood is equal to box-wood, and is therefore much prized for its applicability to many purposes. The name of this tree is *cachi*.

There is also another fruit, called *amba* [mango], green and resembling very much a nut, but larger than the nectarine; the outer rind is bitter, but within it is sweet like honey: before they are ripe they steep them in water to remove the acidity, in the same manner as we are in the habit of steeping green olives.

14. Ku-li, Calicut, Ma Huan⁶⁰

To return to Calicut, much pepper is grown on the hills. Cocoanuts are extensively cultivated, many farmers owning a thousand trees; those having a plantation of three thousand are looked upon as wealthy proprietors...The jackfruit and the plantain abound in this country, which is also well supplied with melons, gourds, and turnips, and every other kind of vegetable.

15. Spices at Calicut, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano⁶¹

We found that pepper and ginger grew here. The pepper trees are similar to the ivy, because they grow round other trees wherever they can attach themselves; their leaves resemble those of the ivy. Their bunches are of the length of half a palm or more, and as slender as a finger: the grain grows very thickly around. The reason why pepper does not grow in our region is, that we have none of the trees to plant. It is not true, as reported amongst us, that the pepper is scorched in order that it may not grow. When it is ripe and gathered in it is green, like ivy; it is left to dry in the sun, and in five or six days it becomes black and wrinkled as we see it. For the propagation of ginger they plant a piece of a small fresh root, about the size of a small nut, which at the end of a month grows large: the leaf resembles that of the wild lily.

FAUNA

1. Sperm whale in Indian Ocean, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁶²

In this [sea] is found a fish that appears occasionally. It has herbs and shells growing on its back. The captains of boats, sometimes, lay anchor against it thinking it to be an island, but when they realize their mistake they set sail from it. Sometimes, when this fish spreads out one of its two wings on its back, it appears like the sail of a ship. When it raises its head above water, you can see it as an enormous object. Sometimes it blows out water from its 'mouth', which resembles a lofty tower. Whenever the sea is calm and the fishes gather together, it collects them round with the help of its tail. Then it opens its mouth and the fishes dive into its belly as if diving into a well. The boats sailing on this sea are scared of it, so during the nightfall they blow the trumpets resembling those of the Christians, for they are afraid that it might lean heavily against their boat and cause it to be drowned.

This sea has a fish that we have caught. It is twenty cubits long. Then we opened up its stomach and took out from inside another fish belonging to the same species; and when we opened up the stomach of this second one, we again found a similar [fish] inside it. Each one of these was alive and wriggling and resembled one another in shape. This huge fish called *al-wal*, even though

it has an enormous constitution, has an [enemy] fish called *al-Lashk*, which is about a cubit long. Thus, whenever this fish (*al-wal*) becomes violent and oppressive and starts doing harm to the other fishes of the sea, this small fish sets against it and, sticking itself at the root of its gill (lit. ear), does not leave it till it has killed it. It [small fish] usually clings to the boat, so this large fish does not come near the boat to avoid the small one.

There is another fish in this sea whose face, it is related, resembles that of a human being. It flies above water. This fish is called *al-mij*. There is another fish that lies in wait for it under water, and as soon as it drops this fish swallows it. It is called *alanqatus*. All the fishes eat up each other.

2. Rhinoceros, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁶³

In his country is also found the marked *al-bishan* [Sanskrit visana, a horn] and that is *al-karkaddan* [Sanskrit khadgadanta, rhinoceros]. It has a single horn on the front side of its forehead, and inside the horn one finds the impression of the image of a creature, for example, the image resembling a human being. The horn is all black and the image inside it is white. In stature this rhinoceros is smaller than the elephant and tends to be black in colour. It resembles the buffalo and is strong; no animal commands the same strength as he does. It has no joints in its knees nor in its forelegs. From its legs up to its armpit it is one [solid] piece, and the elephant runs away from it. It ruminates like the oxen and the camels, and its meat is allowed [to be eaten], and we have eaten it. It is found in large numbers in the forests of this kingdom, and is found all over India except that the horns of this [particular type] are excellent. Sometimes one finds inside the horn the image of a man, a peacock, a fish or other images. The Chinese manufacture girdles out of it. The price of a single girdle in China goes up to two thousand, three thousand or even more *dinars* depending upon the beauty of the picture. All this is purchased in the kingdom of Dharma with cowry which is the money of this kingdom.

3. A rare animal, Muhammad U'fi⁶⁴

Abu Rihan mentions in his writings that within the boundaries of Hindustan, to the east of the Ganges, in the forests of Oudh, there exists an animal called Sharu. It is larger than a rhinoceros, and has two long horns and a small trunk. On the back it has four protuberances resembling four feet. It is so powerful that it will attack an elephant and tear him asunder. No animal has strength enough to contend against it, nor does man venture to hunt it, in fact nothing has power over it except death. Besides natural death, one cause of its destruction is that it often takes up an animal on its horns and tosses it in

the air. The flesh adhering to the horns creates worms, which falling on its back, eat into the flesh till it becomes very sore; they then attack its stomach and destroy it. Or, if there be a high mountain near, when it thunders, it will rush as if to attack (some unseen foe) and falling from the mountain destroy itself. People go out to pick up its horns. Its specific peculiarities (*khassiyat*) are not known.

This animal resembles a camel. It has two protuberances on the back and it generally has teeth, the limbs and organs of the body are venomous, and no other animal can escape it. Its spittle, dung, etc., are all deadly poison. Whatever meets its eye becomes its prey, for it runs as swift as the wind, and overtakes all creatures. It kills every animal that it may encounter. If anyone takes refuge from it in the top of a high tree which it cannot get up, it stands at the foot, and curling its tail into a sort of ladle, it tosses its water up – this in a very few moments brings its victim down. If any one to avoid it gets into a well, it will stand at the brink and cast its dung and urine down, and if one drop of this falls upon a man he will die.

4. Horses imported, Shihabuddin al Umari⁶⁵

Camels are few; they are only for the Sultan and for those from among the Khans, Amirs, Wazirs and high office-bearers who are with him.

Horses are numerous, there are two kinds: Arabian and pack horses, and mostly their work is not worth the praise. Therefore, they are imported to India from the neighbouring countries of the Turks. Arabian horses are brought from Bahrain, Yemen and Iraq in spite of the fact that in the interior of India there are Arabian horses of noble descent: which are cheap in price, but they are only few in number. When the horses stay in India for a long time, their legs become weak.

As regards the mules and donkeys, it is according to their opinion, a great disgrace and a shame to ride them. No jurist or man of letters will think it proper to ride a mule. As regards the donkey, it is a great insult and disgrace to ride it according to them, but everyone rides the horse. The loads of the noblemen are carried on horses, and common people carry them on oxen. They are quick-footed and go with long strides.

5. Trained elephants in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁶⁶

These animals [elephants] are marvellous; for they exceed in size and bulk and strength, and also in understanding, all the animals of the world. This animal hath a big head; small eyes, smaller than a horse's; ears like the wings of owls or bats; a nose reaching quite to the ground extending right down from the top of his head; and two tusks standing out of remarkable magnitude (both in) bulk and length, which are (in fact) teeth rooted in the

upper jaw. This animal doth everything by word of command; so that his driver hath nothing to do but say once, 'Do this,' and he doeth it; nor doth he seem in other respects a brute, but rather a rational creature. They have very big feet, with six hoofs like those of an ox, or rather of a camel. This animal carrieth easily upon him, with a certain structure of timber, more than thirty men; and he is a most gentle beast, and trained for war, so that a single animal counteth by himself equal in war to 1,500 men and more; for they bind to his tusks blades or maces of iron wherewith he smiteth. Most horrible are the powers of this beast, and specially in war.

Two things there be which cannot be withstood by arms; one is the bolt of heaven; the second is a stone from an artillery engine; this is a third! For there is nothing that either can or dare stand against the assault of an elephant in any manner. A marvelous thing! He kneeleth, lieth, sitteth, goeth, and cometh, merely at his master's word. In short, it is impossible to write in words the peculiarities of this animal.

6. The elephants of Hindustan, Timur⁶⁷

It had been constantly dinned into the ears of my soldiers that the chief reliance of the armies of Hindustan was on their mighty elephants; that these animals, in complete armour marched into battle in front of their forces, and that arrows and swords were of no use against them; that in height and bulk they were like small mountains, and their strength was such that at a given signal they could tear up great trees and knock down strongly built walls; that in the battle-field they could take up the horse and his rider with their trunks and hurl them into the air. Some of the soldiers, in the doubt natural to man, brought some little of what they had heard to my attention, so when I assigned their respective positions to the princes and *amirs* of the right and left wing and of the centre, I enquired of the learned and good men that accompanied my army, such as...where they would like to be placed in the day of battle. They had been with me in many campaigns and had witnessed many a great battle, but the stories about the elephants of India had so affected them that they instantly replied that they would like to be placed with the ladies while the battle was in progress. So to allay the apprehensions of this class of men I gave orders that all the buffalos which had been taken and placed with the baggage should be brought up; I then had their heads and necks fastened to their legs, and placed the animals inside the *abattis*.

7. Elephants of the Delhi Sultan, Timur⁶⁸

I sent a party of men into the city to bring out the elephants which Sultan Mahmud had abandoned when he fled. They found 120 enormous elephants and several rhinoceroses, which they brought out to my Court. As the elephants

passed by me I was greatly amused to see the tricks which their drivers had taught them. Every elephant, at the sign of the driver, bowed his head to the ground, made his obeisance, and uttered a cry. At the direction of their drivers they picked up any object from the ground with their trunks and placed it in their driver's hands, or put it into their mouths and kept it. When I saw these mighty animals, so well trained and so obedient to weak man, I was greatly astonished, and I ordered that they should be sent to Turan and Iran, to Fars, and Azur, and Rum, so that the princes and nobles throughout my dominions might see these animals. Accordingly I sent five to Samarkand, two to Tabriz, one to Shiraz, five to Hirat, one to Sharwan, and one to Azurbaijan.

8. "A very intelligent animal," Gonzalez de Clavijo, emissary of Enrique III of Castile to Tamerlane from 1403-1406⁶⁹

The elephant is a very intelligent animal and obeys readily what his guide wishes him to do. The man who guides him, sits on his neck, with his legs across the beast's ears. He carries a goad in his hand, with which he scratches its head, and makes it go where he wishes, for when he makes a sign with the goad, it goes in the direction pointed out. When it fights, the guide is armed, as well as the elephant. It walks like a bear, it jumps, and at each jump, it wounds with swords fastened to the trunk. When they wish these elephants to fight, the guides hit them on the forehead with the goad, and make great wounds; and when they feel the wounds, they give loud grunts, like pigs, and with open mouth, rush on in the direction pointed out by the guide. The wounds heal in the night, if they leave the beasts in the open air, but if they are put under a roof, they will die. When the guide orders the elephant to take anything off the ground, however heavy it may be, it raises it with its trunk and gives it to the men who are in the castle on its back; and when those in the castle want to come down, they order it to stoop, and it stretches out its fore and hind legs in opposite directions, and touches the ground with its belly, while the men descend by cords which hang from the castle...

I hold it to be true, from what I...saw; that one elephant is worth a thousand men in a battle; for when they are amongst men, they rush about wounding everyone; and when they are themselves wounded, they become more fierce, rush about more wildly, and fight better. As the tusks are too high up for them to wound with them, they fasten swords to them, so that they may wound the people under them. They go a day or two without eating, and they are even able to go three days without food.

9. Royal elephants at Vijayanagar, Abder Razzak⁷⁰

Although the king possesses a considerable number of elephants in his

dominions, the largest of these animals are kept near the palace, in the interior of the first and second fortress, between the north and the west. These elephants copulate, and bring forth young. The king possesses one white elephant of an extremely great size, on whose body are scattered here and there grey spots like freckles. Every morning this animal is led out before the monarch, and the sight of him seems to act as a happy omen. The elephants of the palace are fed upon *kitchri*. This substance is cooked, and it is taken out of the copper in the elephant's presence; salt is thrown on it, and fresh sugar is sprinkled over it, and the whole is then mixed well together. They then make balls of it, weighing about two *man*, and, after steeping them in butter, they put them into the elephant's mouth. If one of these ingredients has been forgotten, the elephant attacks his keeper, and the king punishes this negligence severely. These animals take this food twice a day.

Each elephant has a separate compartment, the walls of which are extremely solid, and the roof composed of strong pieces of wood. The neck and the back of these animals are bound with chains, the end of which is strongly fastened to the top of the roof. If they were fixed otherwise, the elephant would easily undo them: the fore feet also are held by chains.

10. Mode of catching elephants, Abder Razzak⁷¹

The mode of catching the elephant is as follows. On the road which the animal takes when he goes to drink, they dig a trench, and cover the mouth of it over, but very lightly. When an elephant falls into it, two or three days are allowed to elapse before anyone goes near him. At the end of that time a man comes and strikes the animal with several blows of a stick well applied: upon this another man shows himself, and violently drives away the man who struck the blows, and, seizing his stick, hurls it a great way off; after which he throws some food to the elephant, and goes away. For several days the first of these men comes to beat the elephant, and the second prevents him from continuing to do so. Before long the animal becomes very friendly with this latter individual, who by degrees, approaches the elephant, and offers him fruits, for which this animal is known to have a liking. He then scratches him and rubs him, and the elephant, won over by this maneuver, submits without resistance, and allows a chain to be passed round his neck.

Elephant hunting by kings

Even the sovereigns of Hindoostan take part in hunting the elephant. They remain a whole month, or even more, in the desert or in the jungles, and when they have taken any of these animals, they are very proud of it. Sometimes they cause criminals to be cast under the feet of an elephant that the animal may crush them to pieces with his knees, his trunk, and his tusks. The merchants

who trade in elephants go to seek them in the island of Ceylon, and export them to different countries, where they sell them according to the tariff, which varies by the *ghez*.

11. Serpents in Malabar, Nicolo Conti⁷²

There are also serpents without feet, six ells in length, wild, but harmless unless irritated [pythons]. They are pleased with the sight of little children, and by this means are enticed into the presence of men. In the same province, and also in another called Susinaria, there is found another kind of serpent with four feet, and an oblong tail like that of large dogs, which are hunted for food. It is as harmless as kids or goats, and the flesh is prized as the best kind of food.

This region also produces other serpents of a remarkable form, one cubit in length and winged like bats. They have seven heads arranged along the body, and live in trees. They are extremely rapid in flight, and the most venomous of all, destroying men by their breath alone. There are also flying cats, for they have a pellicle extending from the fore to the hinder feet and attached to the body, which is drawn up when they are at rest. They fly from tree to tree by extending their feet and shaking their wings. When pursued by hunters they fall to the earth when fatigued by flying, and so are taken.

12. Wildlife in Aland, Athanasius Nikitin⁷³

In that Aland (Aladinand?) there is a bird, *gookook*, that flies at night and cries 'gookook,' and any roof it lights upon, there the man will die; and whoever attempts to kill it, will see fire flashing from its beak. Wild cats rove at night and catch fowls; they live in the hills and among stones. As to monkeys, they live in the woods and have their monkey *kniaz*, who is attended by a host of armed followers. When any of them is caught they complain to their *kniaz*, and an army is sent after the missing; and when they come to a town they pull down the houses and beat the people; and their armies, it is said, are many. They speak their own tongues and bring forth a great many children; and, when a child is unlike its father or its mother, it is thrown out on the high road. Thus they are often caught by the Hindoos, who teach them every sort of handicraft, or sell them at night, that they may not find their way home, or teach them dancing.

13. Birds in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁷⁴

As for birds I say plainly that they are of quite different kinds from what are found on this side of the world; except, indeed, crows and sparrows; for there be parrots and popinjays in very great numbers, so that a thousand or more may be seen in a flock. These birds, when tamed and kept in cages, speak so

that you would take them for rational beings. There be also bats really and truly as big as kites. These birds fly nowhither by day, but only when the sun sets. Wonderful! By day they hang themselves up on trees by the feet, with their bodies downwards, and in the day time they look just like big fruit on the tree.

There are also other birds, such as peacocks, quails, Indian fowls, and others, divers in kind; some white as white can be, some green as green can be, some parti-coloured, of such beauty as is past telling.

14. Birds in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁷⁵

Of birds I say this: that there be many different from those of Lesser India, and of different colours; for there be some white all over as snow; some red as scarlet of the grain; some green as grass; some parti-coloured; in such quantity and delectability as cannot be uttered. Parrots also, or popinjays, after their kind, of every possible colour except black, for black ones are never found; but white all over, and green, and red, and also of mixed colours. The birds of this India seem really like creatures of Paradise...

There is also in this India a certain bird, big like a kite, having a white head and belly, but all red above, which boldly snatches fish out of the hands of fishermen and other people, and indeed (these birds) go on just like dogs.

There is also another big bird, not like a kite, which flies only at night, and utters a voice in the night season like the voice of a man wailing from the deep.

What shall I say then? Even the Devil too there speaketh to men, many a time and oft, in the night season, as I have heard [a reference to the night-hawk].

Everything indeed is a marvel in this India! Verily it is quite another world!

15. Talking parrots, Timur⁷⁶

Bahadur Nahir [from the city of Kutila] sent to me as a tribute two white parrots which could talk well and pleasantly. The envoys presented them to me, and told me that these two parrots had belonged to Sultan Tughlik Shah, and that they had lived at the courts of the Sultans ever since. The sight of these parrots and the sound of their voices gave me great satisfaction, so I gave directions that they should be brought before me in their cages every day that I might listen to their talk.

16. A unique bird, Nicolo Conti⁷⁷

He says that on the boundaries of central India there is an unique bird called semenda, in. the beak of which there are, as it were, several distinct pipes with many openings. When death approaches, this bird collects a quantity

of dry wood in its nest, and, sitting upon it, sings so sweetly with all its pipes that it attracts and soothes the hearers to a marvellous degree; then igniting the wood by flapping its wings, it allows itself to be burnt to death. In a short time a worm is produced from the ashes and from this worm the same kind of bird is again produced. The inhabitants have made a pipe of admirable sweetness for singing, in imitation of the bill of this bird.

17. Insects in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁷⁸

There is there also a certain kind of wasps, which make it their business to kill very big spiders whenever they find them, and after-wards to bury them in the sand, in a deep hole which they make, and so to cover them up that there is no man in the world who can turn them up, or find the place.

There is also a kind of very small ants, white as wool, which have such hard teeth that they gnaw through even timbers and the joints of stones, and, in short whatever dry thing they find on the face of the earth, and mutilate woollen and cotton clothes. And they build out of the finest sand a crust like a wall, so that the sun cannot reach them, and so they remain covered. But if that crust happens to get broken, so that the sun reaches them, they incontinently die.

As regards insects, there be wonders, so many, great, and marvelous, that cannot be told.

D. PRECIOUS STONES AND METALS

1. Stones like cat's eyes in Malabar, Chau Ju-Kua⁷⁹

There is in this country a river of brackish water, which, at a certain point where its different channels meet, becomes very broad. At this point its banks are bold cliffs in the face of which sparks (lit., stars) can constantly be seen, and these by their vital powers fructify and produce small stones like cat's-eyes, clear and translucent.

They lie buried in holes in (these) hills until some day they are washed out by the rush of a flood, when the officials send men in little boats to pick them up. They are prized by the natives.

2. Precious stones in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁸⁰

In this India are many and divers precious stones, among which are the best diamonds under heaven. These stones never can be dressed or shaped by any art, except what nature has given. But I omit the properties of these stones, not to be prolix. In this India are many other precious stones, endowed with excellent virtues, which may be gathered by anybody; nor is anyone hindered.

3. Metals in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁸¹

In this India there exist not, nor is found, any metal but what comes from abroad, except gold, iron, and electrum.

4. Pearls in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁸²

Between that island [Ceylon] and the main are taken pearls or marquerites, in such quantity as to be quite wonderful. So indeed that there are sometimes more than 8,000 boats or vessels, for three months continuously, (engaged in this fishery). It is astounding, and almost incredible, to those who have not seen it, how many are taken.

5. Precious stones at Cambay, Nicolo Conti⁸³

Sailing in this wise together, he arrived in the course of a month at the very noble city of Cambay, situated in the second gulf [Gulf of Cambay] after having passed the mouth of the river Indus. In this country are found those precious stones called sardonixes.

6. Diamond mines, Nicolo Conti⁸⁴

At fifteen days' journey beyond Bizenegalia, towards the north, there is a mountain called Albenigaras, surrounded by pools of water which swarm with venomous animals, and the mountain itself is infested with serpents. This mountain produces diamonds. The ingenuity of man, not having been able to find any mode of approaching the mountain, has, however, discovered a way of getting at the diamonds produced on it. There is another mountain near it, a little higher. Here, at a certain period of the year, men bring oxen, which they drive to the top, and having cut them into pieces, cast the warm and bleeding fragments upon the summit of the other mountain, by means of machines which they construct for that purpose. The diamonds stick to these pieces of flesh. Then come vultures and. Eagles flying to the spot, which, seizing the meat for their food, fly away with it to places where they may be safe from the serpents. To these places the men afterwards come, and collect the diamonds which have fallen from the flesh.

Other stones, which are considered precious, are procured with less difficulty. They dig holes near sandy mountains in places where the stones are found, and continue their excavations until they come to sand mixed with water. This sand they collect and wash with water, through sieves made for the purpose. The sand passes away through the sieve, and the stones, if any, are left behind: this mode of digging for stones of this description prevails universally. Great care is exercised by the masters to prevent theft by the workmen or servants, – overseers being appointed, who not only shake the clothes of the operators, but even examine every part of their persons.

End-notes

1. **Kia Tan [730-805], the great geographer of the Tang period, on the sea route to India, Hirth and Rockhill, p., 101**

From Annam there exists (land) communication with Tien-chu (India), but as Tam-o (Dharma, the first Buddhist patriarch in China) came by sail all the way to P'an-yu (Canton), we may draw the conclusion that this sea-route is the more practicable one to follow.

2. **The *Primera cronica general* [a project of King Alfonso X (1252-1284) of Spain], refers to India as a symbol for the outer limits of the known world, Bryant p., 38**

[In the list of peoples who aided Pompey in his struggle with Julius Caesar, are included] those from the farthest confines of the Orient, those from the banks of the river Ganges, those from the river Yndo, who are from the Indias, those from the river Ydaspe which enters into the Yndo,...and other peoples from other lands beyond which history does not name...[In another place, it states that the conquests of the Emperor Trajan extended beyond the Tigris and Euphrates, and he] came to even the ends of India, where no conqueror had ever reached, unless it was the great Alexander.

3. **The work *Ling-wai-tai-ta* on India, Hirth and Rockhill, p., 101**

Among the hundreds of countries in the West that are famous, the one which ranks the highest of all is Wang-sho-ch'ong, the Mid-India (Yin-tu) of the Tien-chu country, which owes its great fame to being the birthplace of the Buddha.

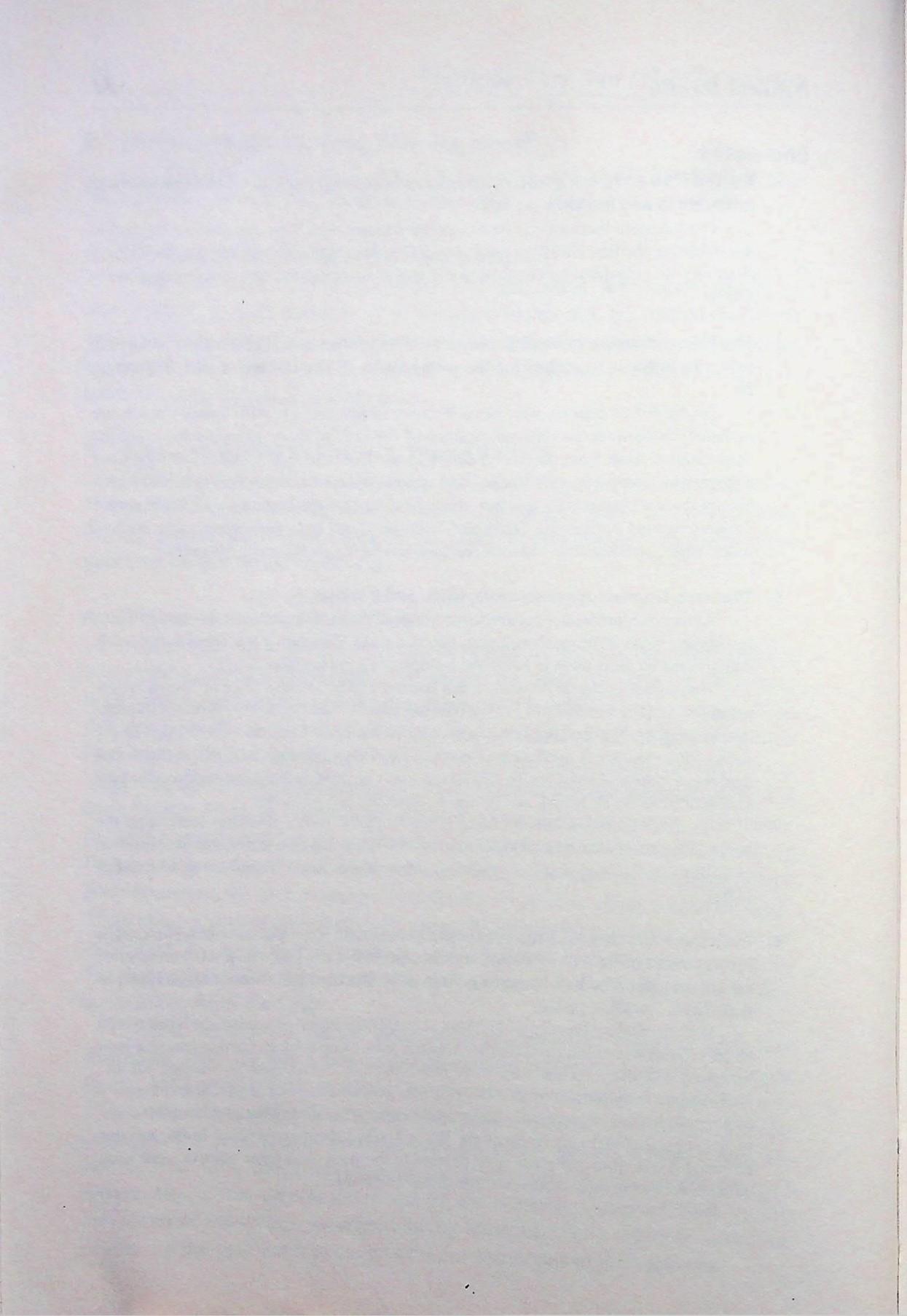
Tradition says that to the east of this country is the Hei-shui river or 'Black water-muddy river' [Irrawadi?] and a Sea. Still farther east beyond this are the Western Regions (Turkestan), the T'u-fan (the Tibetans), Ta-li (Yu-nan) and Kiau-chi (Tongking). To the west of this country is the Eastern Ocean of the Ta-shi (Arabs), and still farther west than this are the realms of the Ta-shi. To the south of (Mid-India) is an island called the kingdom of Si-lan (Ceylon), and its sea is called the Sea of Si-lan.

In olden times the envoy Chang K'ien being in Ta-hia (Bactria) learnt that the land of Shou-tu (India) was 1000 *li* south-east of Tahia. He also learnt that the kingdom of Ta-li (S.W. Yu-nan) was not more than forty stages from Wang-sho ch'ong (Mid-India).

4. **Even travellers who took the land route across Asia from China to the West were interested in India; Friar William of Rubruck on his conversation with envoys of an Indian ruler who had brought presents for the Mongol ruler, Mangu Khan in A.D. 1254, Rockhill, p, 248**

With the feast of Pentecost (31st May [1254]) they began preparing the letter which he (the Chan) was to send you. In the meanwhile he came back to Caracorum, and held his great ceremony on the octave of Pentecost (7th June), and he wanted all the ambassadors to be present the last day of it. He sent also for me...I saw also the envoy of a certain Soldan of India, who had brought eight leopards and ten greyhounds taught to sit on horses' backs, as leopards sit. When I asked them concerning India, in what direction it was from that place, they pointed to the west. And these envoys went back with me for nearly three weeks, always going westward.





Chapter 2

Social Life, Customs and Manners

- A. Some Descriptions of the People
- B. Cleanliness, Dress and Appearance
- C. Diet
- D. Dwellings
- E. Glimpses of People in Some Regions
- F. Festivals
- G. Funeral Rites

A. SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PEOPLE

1. Distinctive traits, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*¹

Sometimes they (Indians) fight each other over sovereignty, but this is rare: I have not seen anyone ousting another person from his kingdom except the people who are next to the land of pepper. Whenever a king subjugates a kingdom, he entrusts the kingdom to a person belonging to the family of the defeated king, who remains under his authority. The people of the kingdom do not accept any other arrangement except this...Neither the Indians nor the Chinese get circumcised.

2. Comparison of India and China, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²

The Chinese have no science (*'ilm*). Their religion originated in India; they assert that it were the Indians who procured their idols for them, and that they are the people who possess religion. The inhabitants of both the countries believe in metempsychosis, but they differ in the details (*furu, lit. consequences*) of their religious practices. The Indians have medicine and philosophy. The Chinese also have medicine, but their medical science is mostly cauterisation.

They have knowledge of astronomy, but in India it is more popular.

3. Abstemious by temperament, Sulaiman³

The Chinese are men of pleasure; but the Indians condemn pleasure, and abstain from it. They do not take wine, nor do they take vinegar, which is made of wine. This does not arise from religious scruples, but from their disdain of it. They say, "The prince who drinks wine is no true king." The Indians are surrounded by enemies, who war against them, and they say "How can a man who inebriates himself conduct the business of a kingdom?"

Not warlike

The Indians sometimes go to war for conquest, but the occasions are rare. I have never seen the people of one country submit to the authority of another, except in the case of that country which comes next to the country of pepper [Malabar]. When a king subdues a neighboring state, he places over it a man belonging to the family of the fallen prince, who carries on the government in the name of the conqueror. The inhabitants would not suffer it to be otherwise.

4. 'Highly meritorious,' Jahiz of Basra⁴

The inhabitants of India are highly meritorious in astrology and medicine. They have a peculiar script. In medicine too they have a supreme insight. They have in their possession some strange secrets of the art of Aesculapius. They have medicines for some very fell diseases. In making busts and statues, in making pictures out of colours, and in architecture they are superb. They are the inventors of chess which is a game of mental gymnastics. They make fine swords and know how to wield them. They know incantations to annihilate the effects of poisoning and to cure aches. Their music is also enchanting. One of their musical instruments is known as *Kanka* (?) which is played on by striking a chord strung in a gourd. It sounds like the guitar and the conch shell...there is every variety of dance, and they have got different kinds of script. There is an uncommon fund of poetical wealth and oratorical affluence in their possession. They know the arts of medicine, philosophy and ethics. The book *Kalah wa Dimna*, has come to us from them. They have plenty of courage and common-sense and many qualities which are wanting even in the Chinese. Cleanliness is a noted feature. They have good looks, tall stature and a taste for perfumes. It is from their land that the peerless ambergris comes for the use of kings. Streams of high thinking flowed down from India to Arabia... They are the inventors of astronomical calculations. Their women are expert singers and their men are expert cooks. Dealers in monetary transactions do not entrust their purses to any except them. The treasurer of every such dealer in Iraq must be a Sindhi or a son of a Sindhi. Their natural

bias is towards figuring, monetary transactions and things like these. They make very honest and faithful servants.

5. Practice telepathy, Ibn Khurdadhbih⁵

The Indians claim that they can achieve their objectives with the help of magic. With its help they can cure poison and remove it from anyone who has been poisoned. They also practise telepathy and with its help they cause things to happen or prevent them from taking place and also cause harm or benefit. Again, they produce phantoms to the bewilderment of the sage. Then they claim that they can control the rains and cold.

6. Kings tolerant, Buzurg bin Shahriyar⁶

The Indian Rajahs are particularly well-disposed towards the Muslims.

7. Men of wisdom, Yaqubi⁷

The Indians are men of wisdom and vision, and in wisdom are superior to all other nations. Their views on astronomy are most authentic. Their dictums in medicine are preferable.

8. Nothing indecent to be seen, Abu Zaidu-I Hasan, of Sira⁸

There is no kingdom which has a more dense population than Kumar. Here every one walks on foot. The inhabitants abstain from licentiousness, and from all sorts of wine. Nothing indecent is to be seen in this country.

9. Endowed with sagacity, Al Masudi⁹

A group of the people of insight and investigation, who have devoted their attention to and contemplated over the nature and origin of this world, have stated that in the ancient times the Indians were the people endowed with righteousness and sagacity...

10. Distinct from all other black people, Al Masudi¹⁰

There prevails a great difference of language and religion in these kingdoms, and they are frequently at war with each other. The most of them believe in the metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul. The Hindus are distinct from all other black people, as the Zanjis, the Damadams, and others, in point of intellect, government, philosophy, strength of constitution, and purity of colour.

Abstain from drinking wine

The Hindus abstain from drinking wine, and censure those who consume it; not because their religion forbids it, but in the dread of its clouding their

reason and depriving them of its powers. If it can be proved of one of their king's, that he has drunk (wine), he forfeits the crown; for he is (not considered to be) able to rule and govern (the empire) if his mind is affected.

11. An anonymous late 10th century Persian text, *Hudud al-alam* [The Limits of the World] has this section on Hindustan¹¹

[Hindustan] possesses many amenities, a numerous population, and many kings...all through Hindustan, wine is held to be unlawful and adultery to be licit....all the inhabitants are idolaters...[the] numerous idols of gold and silver [are tended by Brahmins; *zahidan wa brahmanan*]...whenever one of the chiefs dies, all the inferiors living under his shadow kill themselves.

12. Al- Bakri, the Arab author, on the similarity of customs in Russia and India¹²

They [the Russians] have customs like those of the Indians.

13. Land known for the wisdom of its people, Arab scholar, Sa'id ibn Ahmad al-Andalusi, in his *Tabaqat al-umam*, among the earliest books on the history of science¹³

The first nation to have cultivated science is India...India is known for the wisdom of its people. Over many centuries, all the kings of the past have recognised the ability of the Indians in all the branches of knowledge...The Indians, known to all nations for many centuries, are the metal [essence] of wisdom, the source of fairness and objectivity. They are people of sublime pensiveness, universal apologetics, and useful and rare inventions...To their credit the Indians have made great strides in the study of numbers and of geometry. They have acquired immense information and reached the zenith in their knowledge of the movements of stars [astronomy]...After all that they have surpassed all other peoples in their knowledge of medical sciences.

14. Hindus entirely different from Muslims, Alberuni¹⁴

For the reader must always bear in mind that the Hindus entirely differ from us in every respect, many a subject appearing intricate and obscure which would be perfectly clear if there were more connection between us. The barriers which separate Muslims and Hindus rest on different causes...

Differences in manners and customs

...in all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress, and our ways and customs, and as to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper. By the by, we must confess, in order to be just, that a

similar depreciation of foreigners not only prevails among us and the Hindus, but is common to all nations towards each other...

Another source of difference – self-conceit of Hindus

...there are other causes, the mentioning of which sounds like a satire – peculiarities of their national character, deeply rooted in them, but manifest to everybody. We can only say, folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited, and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people; still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is.

One of their scholars, Varahamihira, in a passage where he calls on the people to honour the Brahmans, says: "the Greeks, though impure, must be honoured, since they were trained in sciences, and therein excelled others. What, then, are we to say of a Brahman, if he combines with his purity the height of science?" In former times, the Hindus used to acknowledge that the progress of science due to the Greeks is much more important than that which is due to themselves. But from this passage of Varahamihira alone you see what a self-lauding man he is, whilst he gives himself airs as doing justice to others. At first I stood to their astronomers in the relation of a pupil to his master, being a stranger among them and not acquainted with their peculiar national and traditional methods of science. On having made some progress, I began to show them the elements on which this science rests, to point out to them some rules of logical deduction and the scientific methods of all mathematics, and then they flocked together round me from all parts, wondering, and most eager to learn from me, asking me at the same time from what Hindu master I had learnt those things, whilst in reality I showed them what they were worth, and thought myself a great deal superior to them, disdaining to be put on a level with them. They almost thought me to be a sorcerer, and when speaking of me to their leading men in their native tongue, they spoke of me as the sea or as *the water which is so acid that vinegar in comparison is sweet...*

Similar attitude of ancient Greeks

The heathen Greeks, before the rise of Christianity, held much of the same opinions as the Hindus; their educated classes thought much the same as those of the Hindus; their common people held the same idolatrous views as those of the Hindus. Therefore I would like to confront the theories of the one nation with those of the other simply on account of their close relationship, not in order to correct them...

15. People skilful, Gardizi¹⁵

The people of India are skillful, clever, and shrewd. They make good and subtle things. From their midst come many sages, especially in the province (*vilayat*) of Kashmir. Their arts are very prodigious. In their religion there are differences, as well as in their customs. I have set forth here information about them such as I could find, in order that it should be known.

The Indians are very fastidious in maintaining (the rules of) relationship and will not take a wife from anywhere, or give a girl away unless the match suit their origin....

Excel in singing and dancing

(They excel in) the art of singing and dancing and in the construction of implements of merriment: they operate (*bijunbanand*) some wonderful stringed instruments (*rud*) in a most difficult way while no other limb (*andam*) is moving (unnecessarily).

They have invented (*nihad-a-and*) manifold arms in great numbers (?) and they fabricate implements (*saz*) of war, such as horns (*buq*) and drums, as well as contraptions producing fearful (*faji*) and terrifying sounds, such as the voice of the elephant or the roaring of the lion or of the tiger, so that he who hears them becomes terror-stricken and horror and dismay fill his heart.

And (they) also (make) stringed instruments for merriments and concerts.

The men producing such things are in the east of India (in the region) called KAMRUP. They make such things that whoever sees them or hears them admits that they are not human beings, but peris.

16. Love painting, Sharif al Idrisi of the royal family of Africa¹⁶

No other art is given preference over the art of drawing or making pictures. The art of pottery is placed on a par with it in being superior (to other arts).

17. Naturally inclined to justice, Sharif al Idrisi¹⁷

The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are

well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side; hence the country is flourishing and their condition prosperous. Among other characteristic marks of their love of truth and horror of vice, the following is related: When a man has a right to demand anything of another, and he happens to meet him has only to draw a circular line upon the ground and to make his debtor enter it which the latter never fails to do and the debtor cannot leave this circle without satisfying his creditor or obtaining the remission of the debt.

18. *Yin-du* famous for medicines, walnuts, precious stones, Chang Te¹⁸

The country of *Yin-du* (Hindustan) is the nearest to China. The population of it is estimated at twelve millions of families. There are in that country famous medicines, great walnuts, precious stones, *Ki she* (cloves), *pin t'ie* (fine steel) and other products. In this kingdom there are large bells suspended near the palace of the ruler. People who have to prefer a complaint strike against the bell. Then their names are registered and their cause is investigated. The houses are made of reeds. As it is very hot there in summer, people pass the whole time in water...diamonds came from *Yin-du*.

19. Sitting on ground honourable, Marco Polo¹⁹

Their mode of sitting is upon carpets on the ground; and when asked why they sit in that manner, they reply that a seat on the earth is honourable; that as we are sprung from the earth, so we shall again return to it; that none can do it sufficient honour, and much less should any despise the earth.

Unwarlike

The people go to battle with lances and shields, but without clothing, and are a despicable unwarlike race. They do not kill cattle nor any kind of animals for food, but when desirous of eating the flesh of sheep or other beasts, or of birds, they procure the Saracens, who are not under the influence of the same laws and customs, to perform the office.

No wine drinking

These people abstain from drinking wine made from grapes; and should a person be detected in the practice, so disreputable would it be held, that his evidence would not be received in court. A similar prejudice exists against persons frequenting the sea, who, they observe, can only be people of desperate fortunes, and whose testimony, as such, ought not to be admitted.

Boys start earning when thirteen

As soon as a son attains the age of thirteen years, they set him at liberty,

and no longer suffer him to be an inmate in his father's house; giving him to the amount, in their money, of twenty to twenty-four groats. Thus provided, they consider him as capable of gaining his own livelihood, by engaging in some kind of trade and thence deriving a profit. These boys never cease to run about in all directions during the whole course of the day, buying an article in one place, and selling it in another. At the season when the pearl fishery is going on, they frequent the beach, and make purchases from the fishermen or others, of five, six, or more (small) pearls, according to their means, carrying them afterwards to the merchants, who, on account of the heat of the sun, remain sitting in their houses, and to whom they say: "These pearls have cost us so much; pray allow such a profit on them as you may judge reasonable." The merchants then give something beyond the price at which they had been obtained. In this way likewise they deal in many other articles, and become excellent and most acute traders. When business is over for the day, they carry to their mothers the provisions necessary for their dinners, which they prepare and dress for them; but these never eat anything at their fathers' expense.

Black colour sign of beauty

In this province the natives, although black, are not born of so deep a dye as they afterwards attain by artificial means, esteeming blackness the perfection of beauty. For this purpose, three times every day, they rub the children over with oil of sesame. The images of their deities they represent black, but the devil they paint white, and assert that all the demons are of that colour.

Addicted to divination

The people are gross idolaters, and much addicted to sorcery and divination. When they are about to make a purchase of goods, they immediately observe the shadow cast by their own bodies in the sunshine; and if the shadow be as large as it should be, they make the purchase that day. Moreover, when they are in any shop for the purpose of buying anything, if they see a tarantula, of which there are many there, they take notice from which side it comes, and regulate their business accordingly. Again, when they are going out of their houses, if they hear anyone sneeze, they return into the house, and stay at home. They are very abstemious in regard to eating, and live to an advanced age. Their teeth are preserved sound by the use of a certain vegetable which they are in the habit of masticating. It also promotes digestion, and conduces generally to the health of the body.

20. Men civil and friendly, John of Monte Corvino²⁰

But India is a region of great extent, and it hath many realms and many

languages. And the men thereof are civil and friendly enough, but of few words, and remind me somewhat of our peasants. They are not, strictly speaking, black, but of an olive colour, and exceedingly well formed both women and men. They go barefoot and naked, except that they wear a cloth round the loins, and boys and girls up to eight years of age wear nothing whatever, but go naked as they came from their mother's womb. They shave not the beard; many times a day they wash; bread and wine they have none. of the fruit that we make use of they have few or none; but for their daily food they use rice and a little milk; and they eat grossly like pigs, to wit, with the whole hand or fist, and without a spoon. In fact, when at their food they do look more like pigs than men.

21. Great security in the country, John of Monte Corvino²¹

There is great security in the country. Bandits and robbers are seldom met with; but they have many exactions to pay. There are few craftsmen, for craft and craftsmen have little remuneration, and there is little room for them. They commonly use swords and daggers like ourselves; and if actually they have a battle they make short work of it, however great the forces be, for they go to battle naked, with nothing but sword and dagger. They have among them a few Saracen mercenaries, who carry bows.

22. Rhabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda and later Archbishop of Mainz, in his work *De Universo*²²

[The Indian] ...possesses the gold of wisdom and the silver of eloquence and the gems of all virtues in sufficient measure.

23. Have the greatest control over their passions, Shihabuddin al-Umari²³

Its people have wisdom and great intelligence. of all nations they have the greatest control over their passions and devote themselves most to what is regarded as bringing one near unto God....

The Indians are the most learned people in the branches of philosophy, medicine, arithmetic and (skilled) in all the wonderful crafts which it is impossible to imitate.

24. Most learned people, Subh-ul-A'sha²⁴

The author of *Masalik ul Absar* [Ibn Fazullah ul-Umari]...continues, "Mohammad b. 'Abdur Rahim al-Qaist has described this country, in his book *Tuhfat ul-Albab* saying: huge country, great justice, considerable wealth, fine management, constant satisfaction, and security wherewith there is no fear in the country of India. The Indians are the most learned people in the branches

of Philosophy, Medicine, Geometry and in all the wonderful arts."

25. A Spaniard, an anonymous Franciscan monk in his *Book of the knowledge of all the Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordships That Are in the World*²⁵

They are men of clear understanding and good memories, learned in the sciences and live according to law. They say that the men who first heard of science and learning were these and that the Persians heard of these things from them...

26. Excel in riches, politeness, and magnificence, Nicolo Conti²⁶

All India is divided into three parts: one, extending from Persia to the Indus; the second, comprising the district from the Indus to the Ganges; and the third, all that is beyond. This third part excels the others in riches, politeness, and magnificence, and is equal to our own country in the style in civilisation. For the inhabitants have most sumptuous buildings, elegant habitations, and handsome furniture; they lead a more refined life, removed from all barbarity and coarseness. The men are extremely humane, and the merchants very rich, so much so that some will carry on their business in forty of their own ships, each of which is valued at fifty thousand gold pieces. These alone use tables at their meals, in the manner of Europeans, with silver vessels upon them; whilst the inhabitants of the rest of India eat upon carpets spread upon the ground. There are no vines, nor is the use of wine known among the Indians; but they make a drink similar to wine of pounded rice mixed with water, the juice of certain trees, of a red colour, being added to it. In Taprobana they cut off the branches of a tree called *thal*, and hang them up on high: these branches give out a sweet juice, which is a favourite drink with them.

Holy lake

There is also a lake lying between the Indus and the Ganges, the water of which possesses a remarkable flavour and is drunk with great pleasure. All the inhabitants of that district, and even those living at a great distance, flock to this lake for the purpose of procuring the water. By means of relays of carriers mounted on horse-back, they draw the water fresh every day.

They have no corn or bread, but live upon a certain kind of meal, rice, flesh, milk, and cheese. They have a great quantity of poultry, capons, partridges, pheasants, and other wild birds. They are much addicted to fowling and hunting.

They have no beards, but very long hair. Some tie their hair at the back of their head with a silken cord, and let it flow over their shoulders, and in this way go to war. They have barbers like ourselves.

The men resemble Europeans in stature and the duration of their lives. They sleep upon silken mattresses, on beds ornamented with gold. The style of dress is different in different regions. Wool is very little used. There is great abundance of flax and silk, and of these they make their garments. Almost all, both men and women, wear a linen cloth bound round the body, so as to cover the front of the person, and descending as low as the knees, and over this a garment of linen or silk, which, with the men, descends to just below the knees, and with the women to the ankles. They cannot wear more clothing on account of the great heat, and for the same reason they only wear sandals, with purple and golden ties, as we see in ancient statues. In some places the women have shoes made of thin leather, ornamented with gold and silk. By way of ornament they wear rings of gold on their arms and on their hands; also around their necks and legs, of the weight of three pounds, and studded with gems.

Public women are everywhere to be had, residing in particular houses of their own in all parts of the cities, who attract the men by sweet perfumes and ointments, by their blandishments, beauty, and youth; for the Indians are much addicted to licentiousness; but unnatural crimes are unknown among them.

The manner of adorning the head is various, but for the most part the head is covered with a cloth embroidered with gold, the hair being bound up with a silken cord. In some places they twist up the hair upon the top of the head, like a pyramid, sticking a golden bodkin in the centre, from which golden threads, with pieces of cloth of various colours interwoven with gold, hang suspended over the hair. Some wear false hair, of a black colour, for that is the colour held in highest estimation. Some cover the head with the leaves of trees painted, but none paint faces, with the exception of those who dwell near Cathay.

27. Pestilence unknown, Nicolo Conti²⁷

Pestilence is unknown among the Indians; neither are they exposed to those diseases which carry off the population in our own countries: the consequence is that the number of these people and nations exceeds belief. Their armies consist of a million of men and upwards.

28. Good at calculations, Ma Huan²⁸

They have no abacus on which to make their calculations, but in its place they use their toes and fingers, and, what is very wonderful, they are never wrong in their reckonings.

29. Bow on meeting, Athanasius Nikitin²⁹

On meeting together, they bow to each other like the monks, touching the ground with both hands, but say nothing.

B. CLEANLINESS, DRESS AND APPEARANCE

1. Bathe frequently, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*³⁰

The Indians take a bath every day before having their meals. The Indians do not cohabit with the woman during the period of menstruation; they make them leave their homes and keep away from them [from their impurity]. [On the other hand] the Chinese cohabit with them during the period of menstruation and do not make them leave [their homes]. The Indians clean their teeth and no one takes food before cleaning them or before having a bath, but the Chinese do not follow this practice.

2. At Kulin, anoint bodies with turmeric, *Chau Ju-Kua*³¹

Whenever they (i.e., the inhabitants) have taken a bath, they anoint their bodies with *yu-kin* (turmeric), as they like to have their bodies gilt like that of a Buddha.

3. Bathe twice a day, *Marco Polo*³²

Both men and women wash their whole bodies in water twice every day, that is, in the morning and the evening. Until this ablution has taken place they neither eat nor drink; and the person who should neglect this observance, would be regarded as a heretic.

4. Bathe in cold water, *Nicolo Conti*³³

Warm baths are not used amongst them, excepting by Indians of the superior classes to the north of the Ganges. The others wash themselves many times in the day with cold water.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

1. Keep long beards, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*³⁴

The Indians keep long beards. I have often seen a man with a beard as long as three cubits; they do not trim their moustache. Most of the Chinese have no beards which is natural to most of them. In India, when a person dies, they completely shave his head and beard.

2. Dress at Mansura and Multan, *Abu Ishak al Istakhri*³⁵

The dress of the people is like that of the people of Irak, but the dress of their kings resembles that of the kings of India in respect of the hair and the tunic...

The people of Multan wear trousers, and most of them speak Persian and Sindi, as in Mansura.

3. Dress at Kulin, the Ling-wai-tai-ta³⁶

The people of Ku-lin are black, they wrap their bodies in white cotton cloth, wear their beards and all their hair loose and uncovered. They wear red leather shoes, so they look when walking as if they had the painted feet of a *lo-han*... The king wraps his body in cotton-cloth, when he goes out he is carried in a litter (*juan-tou*) of cotton cloth, or else he rides on an elephant.

4. Dress at the court of T'ien-chu, Chau Ju-Kua³⁷

The king dresses in brocaded silk, and his hair is wound into a spiral knot on the crown of his head; the rest of the hair is cut short. When holding his court in the morning he sits on a *tong* skin – *tong* being the name of an animal – ornamented with representations of various objects painted in red wax; and his courtiers make obeisance to him and pray for his life. When he goes forth he rides on horseback, and his saddle and bridle are thickly set with dark gold and silver. His followers, three hundred in number, are armed with spears and swords.

His consort wears a gold embroidered scarlet dress with large sleeves. Once a year she shows herself in public, when considerable bounty is given to the poor.

“In this country there is holy-water which can still the wind and waves. The foreign traders fill opaque glass bottles with it, and when they suddenly get in a rough sea they still it by sprinkling this water on it.”

5. Dress of king of Maabar, Marco Polo³⁸

The natives of this part of the country always go naked, excepting that they cover with a piece of cloth those parts of the body which modesty dictates. The king is no more clothed than the rest, except that he has a piece of richer cloth; but is honourably distinguished by various kinds of ornaments, such as a collar set with jewels, sapphires, emeralds, and rubies, of immense value. He also wears, suspended from the neck and reaching to the breast, a fine silken string containing one hundred and four large and handsome pearls and rubies. The reason for this particular number is, that he is required by the rules of his religion to repeat a prayer or invocation so many times, daily, in honour of his gods, and this his ancestors never failed to perform. The daily prayer consists of these words, *pacauca, pacauca, pacauca* which they repeat one hundred and four [eight?] times. On each arm he wears three gold bracelets, adorned with pearls and jewels; on three different parts of the leg, golden bands ornamented in the same manner; and on the toes of his

feet, as well as on his fingers, rings of inestimable value. To this king it is indeed a matter of facility to display such splendid regalia, as the precious stones and the pearls are all the produce of his own dominions.

6. Dress of people at Calicut, Abder Razzak³⁹

The blacks of this country have the body nearly naked; they wear only bandages round the middle, called *lankoutah* [langot], which descend from the navel to above the knee. In one hand they hold an Indian poignard, which has the brilliance of a drop of water, and in the other a buckler of ox-hide, which might be taken for a piece of mist. This costume is common to the king and to the beggar.

As to the Mussulmauns, they dress themselves in magnificent apparel after the manner of the Arabs, and manifest luxury in every particular. After I had an opportunity of seeing a considerable number of Mussulmauns and Infidels, I had a comfortable lodging assigned to me, and after the lapse of three days was conducted to an audience with the king [the Zamorin]. I saw a man with his body naked, like the rest of the Hindus.

7. Dress at Junnar, Athanasius Nikitin⁴⁰

In the land of India it is the custom for foreign traders to stop at inns; there the food is cooked for the guests by the landlady, who also makes the bed and sleeps with the stranger. Women that know you willingly concede their favours, for they like white men. In the winter, the people put on the fata and wear it round the waist, on the shoulders, and on the head; but the princes and nobles put trousers on, a shirt and a kaftan (a long coat), wearing a fata on the shoulders, another as a belt round the waist, and a third round the head.

C. DIET

1. Eat rice, Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India⁴¹

The food of the Indians consists of rice, and that of the Chinese wheat and rice. The Indians do not eat wheat.

2. Permissible and forbidden food, Alberuni⁴²

Originally killing in general was forbidden to them, as it is to the Christians and Manicheans. People, however, have the desire for meat, and will always fling aside every order to the contrary. Therefore the here-mentioned law applies in particular only to the Brahmans, because they are the guardians of the religion, and because it forbids them to give way to their lusts. The same rule applies to those members of the Christian clergy who are

in rank above the bishops, viz. the metropolitans, the *catholici*, and the patriarchs, not to the lower grades, such as presbyter and deacon, except in the case that a man who holds one of these degrees is at the same time a monk.

As matters stand thus, it is allowed to kill animals by means of strangulation, but only certain animals, others being excluded. The meat of such animals, the killing of which is allowed, is forbidden in case they die a sudden death. Animals the killing of which is allowed are sheep, goats, gazelles, hares, rhinoceroses (*gandha*), the buffaloes, fish, water and land birds, as sparrows, ring-doves, francolins, doves, peacocks, and other animals which are not loathsome to man nor noxious.

That which is forbidden are cows, horses, mules, asses, camels, elephants, tame poultry, crows, parrots, nightingales, all kinds of eggs and wine. The latter is allowed to the Sudra. He may drink it, but dare not sell it, as he is not allowed to sell meat.

3. Diet in Malabar, Chau Ju-Kua⁴³

The people are very dainty in their diet; they have a hundred ways of cooking their food, which varies every day.

There is an officer called *Han-lin* who lays the viands and drinks before the king, and sees how much food he eats, regulating his diet so that he may not exceed the proper measure...

4. Mode of eating and drinking, Marco Polo⁴⁴

It ought to be noticed, that in eating they make use of the right hand only, nor do they ever touch their food with the left. For every cleanly and delicate work they employ the former, and reserve the latter for the base uses of personal abstersion, and other offices connected with the animal functions.

They drink out of a particular kind of vessel, and each individual from his own, never making use of the drinking pot of another person. When they drink they do not apply the vessel to the mouth, but hold it above the head, and pour the liquor into the mouth, not suffering the vessel on any account to touch the lips. In giving drink to a stranger, they do not hand their vessel to him, but, if he is not provided with one of his own, pour the wine or other liquor into his hands, from which he drinks it, as from a cup.

5. Inhabitants of Diu drink rain water, Abulfeda⁴⁵

A traveller states the following: Div is an Island which faces Kanbait (Cambay) from the southern side. Its inhabitants practice piracy and live in reed huts. Their drink is rain water.

6. Rice eaten in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁴⁶

Wheaten bread is there not eaten by the natives, although wheat they have in plenty; but rice is eaten with its seasoning, only boiled in water. And they have milk and butter and oil, which they often eat uncooked.

7. Hindus eat no meat, Athanasius Nikitin⁴⁷

The Hindoos eat no meat, no cow flesh, no mutton, no chicken. The banquets were all on pork; and pigs are in great abundance. They take their meals twice a day, but not at night, and drink no wine nor mead; but with Mahomedans they neither eat nor drink. Their fare is poor. They eat not with one another nor with their wives, and live on Indian corn, carrots with oil, and different herbs. Always eating with the right hand, they will never set the left hand to anything nor use a knife; the spoon is unknown. In travelling everyone has a stone pot to cook his broth in. They take care that Mahomedans do not look into their pot, nor see their food, and should this happen they will not eat it; some, therefore, hide themselves under a linen cloth lest they should be seen when eating...They sit down to eat, and wash their hands and feet, and rinse their mouths before they do so.

8. Addicted to betel, Marco Polo⁴⁸

All the people of this city [Kael], as well as the natives of India in general, are addicted to the custom of having continually in their mouths the leaf called *tembul*; which they do, partly from habit, and partly from the gratification it affords. Upon chewing it, they spit out the saliva to which it gives occasion. Persons of rank have the leaf prepared with camphor and other aromatic drugs, and also with a mixture of quicklime. I have been told that it is extremely conducive to health.

9. Guests honoured with betel, Shihabuddin al Umari⁴⁹

Shibli told me that wine is not found in Delhi either in public or in secret because this sovereign is so severe against it and dislikes those who are addicted to it. Further the narrator continues: the Indians have no inclination for wine and alcoholic drinks, and content themselves with betel and this is permitted, and is agreeable without doubt and possesses qualities some of which are not found in wine. It perfumes the breath, promotes the digestion, cheers up the soul immensely and imparts extraordinary joy along with strengthening the intellect and clarifying the memory and is delightful in taste. As regards its components it is the leaf of betel, and betel-nut and lime which are specially prepared. He said: the people of this country do not consider an honour greater than this. When a man becomes the guest of another and honours him with all sorts of meals and roasts and sweets and drinks and perfumes and aromatics

and he does not present along with them betel, it would not be considered for him an honour and he would not be considered to have honoured him. Likewise when a highly placed person wants to show regard to another, he offers him betel.

D. DWELLINGS

1. On the Coromandel Coast, Chau Ju-Kua⁵⁰

"The walls of their rooms and the mats they sit on are besmeared with cow-dung, which they look upon as a clean substance. In their houses they set up altars, three feet high and which are reached by three steps, and on which daily in the morning they burn incense and offer flowers; this is called 'the offering to Fo.'"

When Arab (*Ta-shi*) foreigners come to this country they give them seats outside the doors and lodge them in separate houses supplied with beddings and household utensils.

2. Ingeniously contrived cots with mosquito nets, Marco Polo⁵¹

The natives make use of a kind of bedstead, or cot, of very light cane-work, so ingeniously contrived that when they repose on them, and are inclined to sleep, they can draw close the curtains about them by pulling a string. This they do in order to exclude the tarantulas, which bite grievously, as well as to prevent their being annoyed by fleas and other small vermin; whilst at the same time the air so necessary for mitigating the excessive heat, is not excluded. Indulgences of this nature, however, are enjoyed only by persons of rank and fortune; others of the inferior class lie in the open streets.

3. Ming ambassador on the royal dwelling at Pandua in 1415⁵²

The dwelling of the King is all of bricks set in mortar, the flight of steps leading up to it is high and broad. The halls are flat-roofed and white-washed inside. The inner doors are of triple thickness and of nine panels. In the audience hall all the pillars are plated with brass ornamented with figures of flowers and animals, carved and polished. To the right and left are long verandahs on which were drawn up (on the occasion of our audience) over a thousand men in shining armour, and on horseback outside, filling the courtyard, were long ranks of (our) Chinese (soldiers) in shining helmets and coats of mail, with spears, swords, bows and arrows, looking martial and lusty. To the right and left of the King were hundreds of peacock feather umbrellas and before the hall were some hundreds of soldiers mounted on elephants. The king sat cross-

legged in the principal hall on a high throne inlaid with precious stones and a two-edged sword lay across his lap.

4. Houses at Cochin, Ma Huan⁵³

The houses are built of the wood of the cocoanut tree and are thatched with its leaves, which render them perfectly watertight.

E. GLIMPSES OF PEOPLE IN SOME PARTS OF INDIA THE ISLANDS

1. Women rulers in Laccadive and Maldive Islands, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁵⁴

Between it [Sea of Harkandh i.e., Bay of Bengal] and the Sea of Larvi [Lata for Gujarat] there are numerous islands... These islands are ruled by a woman...

It is said that no one can surpass the inhabitants of these islands in skill to the extent that they make the chemises out of a single piece woven together with the two sleeves, the two gores and the collar. They build boats and houses and work with similar skill in the manufacture of other industries...

2. People in the Andamans, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁵⁵

On the other side of these [islands] there are two islands, and between them there is the sea. They are called Andaman. Their inhabitants are cannibals. They are black with curly hair, and have ugly faces and eyes and long legs. Each one has a pudenda, that is to say, his penis, nearly a cubit long; and they are naked. They have no canoes; and if they had them, they would have eaten up anyone passing by them. Sometimes it so happens that the boats slow down, and their speed is retarded due to the [strong] wind. The [drinking] water in the boats gets used up; and so they [sailors] approach these (islands) and refill the water. Hence, sometimes they [the cannibals] capture some of them [the sailors], but most of them escape.

3. Barter in Nicobar Islands, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁵⁶

Lanjabalus...[Its inhabitants] do not understand Arabic nor any of the languages which the merchants know. These people do not wear any clothes. They are white and scanty bearded. They [the sailors] relate that they have never seen their womenfolk. This is because it is the men who come out to them from the island in canoes carved out of a single piece of wood. They carry with them

coconut, sugarcane, bananas and coconut wine. This is a kind of drink (*sharab*), white in colour. When it is taken soon after it is extracted from the palm-tree, it tastes sweet like honey; but if it is left for an hour, it turns into wine (*sharaban*), and if it is left for some days, it turns into vinegar. They sell it in exchange for iron. Sometimes a little quantity of ambergris is found by them which they sell in exchange for a piece of iron. They carry on commercial transactions by signs, exchanging things by hand, for they do not understand the language. They are expert swimmers. Sometimes, they carry away the iron forcibly from the merchants and do not give them anything [in return].

4. Ox worshipped in Nicobar Islands, Odoric of Pordenone⁵⁷

Departing from that country and sailing towards the south over the Ocean Sea, I found many islands and countries, where among was one called Nicoveran. And this is a great isle, having a compass of a good 2,000 miles, and both the men and the women there have faces like dogs. And these people worship the ox as their god, wherefore they always wear upon the forehead an ox made of gold or silver, in token that he is their god. All the folk of that country, whether men or women, go naked, wearing nothing in the world but an handkerchief to cover their shame. They be stalwart men and stout in battle, going forth to war naked as they are with only a shield that covers them from head to foot. And if they hap to take any one in war who cannot produce money to ransom himself withal they do straightway eat him. But if they can get money from him they let him go.

And the king of that country weareth round his neck a string of three hundred very big pearls, for that he maketh to his gods daily three hundred prayers. He carrieth also in his hand a certain precious stone called a ruby, a good span in length and breadth, so that when he hath this stone in his hand it shows like a flame of fire. And this, it is said, is the most noble and valuable gem that existeth at this day in the world, and the great emperor of the Tartars of Cathay hath never been able to get it into his possession either by force or by money, or by any device whatever. This king attends to justice and maintains it, and throughout his realm all men may fare safely.

5. People live in caves in the Nicobars, Ma Huan⁵⁸

In the Great Sea are the Tsui-lan shan (the Nicobar Islands). There are three or four islands (in the group). The highest is called Su-tu-man. Sailing before the north-east wind they can be reached from Mao shan (Pulo Weh) in three days.

The people all live in caves. All of them, males as well as females, go naked like wild animals, so they grow no rice, but feed on yams, bananas, jackfruit, and such like things, or on fish and prawns.

There is a foolish story to the effect that if they wore but little piece of cotton to hide their nakedness, they would have ulcers and sores. This is because when anciently the Buddha crossed the sea, on coming here he took off his clothing and bathed, when the natives stole them. The Buddha thereupon cursed them. It is also commonly said that this is the country of Ch'ih-luan-wu [?].

SIND AND MULTAN

6. The infidels of Sind, Ibn Haukal⁵⁹

The infidels who inhabit Sind are called Budha and Mand. They reside in the tract between Turan, Multan, and Mansura, to the west of the Mihran. They breed camels, which are sought after in Khurasan and elsewhere, for the purpose of having crosses from those of Bactria.

The city where the Budhites carry on their trade is Kandabil, and they resemble men of the desert. They live in houses made of reeds and grass. The Mands dwell on the banks of the Mihran, from the boundary of Multan to the sea, and in the desert between Makran and Famhal. They have many cattle sheds and pasturages, and form a large population.

7. The Jats, Ibn Haukal⁶⁰

Between Mansura and Makran the waters from the Mihran form lakes, and the inhabitants of the country are the Indian races called Zat. Those who are near the river dwell in houses formed of reeds, like the Berbers, and eat fish and aquatic birds...Another clan of them, who live remote from the banks, are like the Kurds, and feed on milk, cheese, and bread made of millet.

8. Jats a robust race, Timur⁶¹

On the 8th of the month I marched from Ahruni, through the jungle to a village called Tohana. In answer to the inquiries I made about the inhabitants, I learned that they were a robust race, and were called *Jats*. They were Musulmans only in name and had not their equals in theft and highway robbery. They plundered caravans upon the road, and were a terror to Musulmans and travellers. They had now abandoned the village and had fled to the sugarcane fields, the valleys, and the jungles. When these facts reached my ears I prepared a force which I placed under the direction of Tokal Bahadur, son of the Hindu Karkarra, and sent it against the *Jats*. They accordingly marched into the sugarcanes and jungles. I also sent Maulana Nasirud din in pursuit of them. When these forces overtook the *Jats* they put 200 to the sword and made the rest prisoners. A large stock of cattle was captured, and my soldiers returned to camp.

It was again brought to my knowledge that these turbulent *Jats* were as numerous as ants or locusts, and that no traveller or merchant passed unscathed

from their hands. They had now taken flight, and had gone into jungles and deserts hard to penetrate. A few of them had been killed, but it was my fixed determination to clear from thieves and robbers every country that I subdued, so that the servants of God, and Musulmans and travellers might be secure from their violence.

My great object in invading Hindustan had been to wage a religious war against the infidel Hindus, and it now appeared to me that it was necessary for me to put down these *Jats* and to deliver travellers from their hands. I consequently placed the care of the baggage and of all the plunder which had been gained in my victories in the charge of Amir Sulaiman Shah, to convey it with the heavy baggage to the town of Samana.

On the 9th of the month I despatched the baggage from Tohana, and on the same day I marched into the jungles and wilds, and slew 2,000 demon-like *Jats*. I made their wives and children captives, and plundered their cattle and property. Thus I delivered the country from the terror it had long suffered at the hands of the marauding *Jats*.

9. The Meds, Al-Idrisi⁶²

Mamhal is situated between Sind and India. Upon the confines of the desert just mentioned there dwells a hardy race called Mand [Med]. They graze their flocks to within a short distance of Mamhal. These people are numerous. They have many horses and camels, and they extend their incursions as far as Dur [Alor] upon the banks of the Mihran, and sometimes they penetrate even as far as the frontiers of Makran.

10. The Nadhas, Al-Idrisi⁶³

From Multan to the vicinity of Mansura the country is occupied by a warlike race, called Nadha. It consists of a number of tribes scattered about between Tubaran Makran, Multan, and Mansura, like the Berber nomads. The Nadhas have peculiar dwellings, and marshes in which they take refuge, on the west of the Mihran. They possess excellent camels, and, particularly, a sort which they breed, called Karah. This is held in high esteem in Khurasan and the rest of Persia. It resembles the camel of Balkh and the female camel of Samarkand, for it is of good temper and has two humps; not like the camels of our countries, which have only one.

11. Inhabitants of Sind, Chau Ju-Kua⁶⁴

"Nan-ni-hua-lo city [perhaps in Sindh] has a triple wall. The inhabitants morning and evening bathe and besmear their bodies with *yu-kin* (turmeric), so as to look like golden coloured images (lit., Buddhas)." A large proportion of them are called P'o-lo-mon (Brahmans), as they are genuine descendants

of Fo [Brahma]. ...

The native products include the best quality of putchuck, and fine white flowered (or dotted) cotton stuffs. The people eat much butter, rice, beans and vegetables: they rarely eat fish or meat.

A road leads to the Western Regions (Si-yu); when there are raids (on Nan-ni-hua-lo?) by the light horsemen of the Western Regions [early Muslim invaders of Sindh?], the only resistance they offer is to lock their gates. In a few days provisions run short, and (the raiders) withdraw of their own accord.

12. People in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁶⁵

Here be many and boundless marvels: and in this first India beginneth, as it were, another world; for the men and women be all black, and they have for covering nothing but a strip of cotton tied round the loins, and the end of it flung over the naked neck...

The people of this India are very clean in their feeding; true in speech, and eminent in justice, maintaining carefully the privilege of every man according to his degree, as they have come down from old times.

SOUTH INDIA

13. People of Malabar, Chau Ju-Kua⁶⁶

The people of this country are of a dark brown complexion, the lobes of their ears reach down to their shoulders. They are skilled in archery and dexterous with the sword and lance. They love fighting and ride elephants in battle, when they also wear turbans of coloured silks.

They are extremely devout Buddhists [a confusion with Hindus].

14. People in Coromandel, Chau Ju-Kua⁶⁷

"The inhabitants are hot-tempered and reckless of life; nay, in the presence of the king they will fight man to man with swords and die without regret."

"Father and son, elder and younger brother, have their meals cooked in separate kettles and served in separate dishes; yet they are deeply alive to family duties."

15. People at T'ien-chu [the coast of Madras?], Chau Ju-Kua⁶⁸

"The country of T'ien-chu is subordinate to the country of Tats'in;" its rulers are all selected by Ta-ts'in.

It is the custom of the people to plait their hair and to let it hang down, but the temples and the crown of the head are covered with a silken turban. In their dwellings they use plaster instead of tiles. They have walled cities in which the people dwell...

They are clever jugglers. They have bows and arrows, armour, spears, flying-ladders, saps, and also the contrivances called the 'wooden oxen' and the 'gliding-horses'; yet they are cowards in battle. They are good astronomers and calculators of calendar (or astrologers). They all study the Si-tan-chang-shu [Siddhanta book of rules]... They use the leaves of the *pei-to* [Sanskrit patra] as paper.

In the periods *chong-kuan* (A.D. 627-650) and *tien-sho'u* (690-692) of the T'ang (this country) sent envoys with tribute (to our Court). In the *yung-hi* period (of the Sung, A.D. 948-988) a priest by name Lo-hu-na [Rahula?] arrived (in Ts'uan-cho'u) by sea; he called himself a native T'ien-chu. The foreign traders, considering that he was a foreign priest, vied with each other in presenting him gold, silks, jewels and precious stones, but the priest had no use for them himself. He bought a piece of ground and built a Buddhist shrine in the southern suburb of Ts'uan-chou; it is the Pau-lin-yuan of the present day.

16. People at Hili [Ely, on the Malabar Coast], Wang Ta-Yuan⁶⁹

The climate is hot, the usages of the people pure. They are hot-headed, and wherever they go, they carry about with them their bows and arrows. Men and women cut their hair and wrap around them *Liu pu* (i.e., cotton cloth from the Maldives Islands).

They cede the path to each other; they will not pick up things on the highways; their customs approach those of antiquity (in honesty). Should anyone steal an ox, the chief verifies the number of oxen, and (or) the rightful owner seizes all the property of the offender, and he is put to death.

17. Customs at Malabar, Ibn Battuta⁷⁰

Mulaybar [Malabar]...is the pepper country. It extends for two months' journey along the coast from Sandabur [Goa] to Kawlam [Quilon, in Travancore]. The road over the whole distance runs beneath the shade of trees, and at every half-mile there is a wooden shed with benches on which all travellers, whether Muslims or infidels, may sit. At each shed there is a well for drinking and an infidel who is in charge of it. If the traveller is an infidel he gives him water in vessels; if he is a Muslim he pours the water into his hands, continuing to do so until he signs to him to stop. It is the custom of the infidels in the Mulaybar lands that no Muslim may enter their houses or eat from their vessels; if he does so they break the vessels or give them to the Muslims. In places where there are no Muslim inhabitants they give him food on banana leaves. At all the halting-places on this road there are houses belonging to Muslims, at which Muslim travellers alight, and where they buy all that they need. Were it not for them no Muslim could travel by it.

On this road, which, as we have said, extends for a two months' march, there is not a foot of ground but is cultivated. Every man has his own orchard, with his house in the middle and a wooden palisade all round it. The road runs through the orchards, and when it comes to a palisade there are wooden steps to go up by and another flight of steps down into the next orchard. No one travels on a animal in that country, and only the sultan possesses horses. The principal vehicle of the inhabitants is a palanquin carried on the shoulders of slaves or hired porters; those who do not travel on palanquins go on foot, be they who they may. Baggage and merchandise is transported by hired carriers, and a single merchant may have a hundred such or thereabouts carrying his goods. I have never seen a safer road than this, for they put to death anyone who steals a single nut, and if any fruit falls no one picks it up but the owner. Indeed we sometimes met infidels during the night on this road, and when they saw us they stood aside to let us pass. Muslims are most highly honoured amongst them, except that, as we have said, they do not eat with them nor allow them into their houses. In the Mulaybar lands there are twelve infidel sultans, some of them strong with armies numbering fifty thousand men, and others weak with armies of three thousand. Yet there is no discord whatever between them, and the strong does not desire to seize the possessions of the weak. At the boundary of the territories of each ruler there is a wooden gateway, on which is engraved the name of the ruler whose territories begin at that point. This is called the 'Gate of Security' of such-and-such a prince. If any Muslim or infidel criminal flees from the territories of one and reaches the Gate of Security of another, his life is safe, and the prince from whom he has fled cannot seize him, even though he be a powerful, prince, with a great army. The rulers in these lands transmit their sovereignty to their sister's sons, to the exclusion of their own children.

Barcelore

The first town in the land of Mulaybar that we entered was the town of Abu-Sarur [Barcelore], a small place on a large inlet and abounding in coco-palms. Two days journey brought us to Fakanur [Bacanor, now Barkur], a large town on an inlet; here there is a large quantity of sugar canes, which are unexcelled in the rest of that country. The chief of the Muslim community at Fakanur is called Basadaw. He possesses about thirty warships, commanded by a Muslim called Lula, who is an evildoer and a pirate and a robber of merchants. When we anchored, the sultan sent his son to us to stay on board the ship as a hostage. We went on shore to visit him and he treated us with the utmost hospitality for three nights, as a mark of respect for the sultan of India and also from a desire to make some profit by trading with the personnel of our vessels. It is a custom of theirs that every ship that passes by a town must

needs anchor at it and give a present to the ruler. This they call the 'right of *bandar*.' If anyone omits to do this, they sail out in pursuit of him, bring him into the port by force, double the tax on him, and prevent him from proceeding on his journey for as long as they wish. Three days after leaving Fakanur we reached Manjarur [Mangalore], a large town on the inlet called ad-Dumb, which is the largest inlet in the land of Mulaybar. This is the town at which most of the merchants from Fars and Yemen disembark, and pepper and ginger are exceedingly abundant there. The sultan of Manjarur is one of the principal rulers in that land, and his name is Rama Daw. There is a colony of about four thousand Muslims there, living in a suburb alongside the town. Conflicts frequently break out between them and the townspeople, but the sultan makes peace between them on account of his need of the merchants.

Eli

After staying at Manjarur for three days, we set sail for the town of Hili [Ili or Eli], which we reached two days later. It is large and well-built, situated on a big inlet which is navigable for large vessels. This is the farthest town reached by ships from China; they enter only this port, the port of Kawlam, and Calicut. The town of Hili is venerated by both Muslims and infidels on account of its cathedral mosque, and seafarers make many votive offerings to it. This mosque contains a number of students, who receive stipends from its revenues, and it has a kitchen from which travellers and the Muslim poor are supplied with food. Thence we sailed to Jurfattan [Cannanore], Dahfattan, and Budfattan; the sultan of these towns is called Kuwayl, and is one of the most powerful sultans of Mulaybar. At Dahfattan there is a great *ba'in* and a cathedral mosque, which were built by Kuwayl's grandfather, who was converted to Islam. Most of the inhabitants of Budfattan are Brahmans, who are venerated by the infidels and who hate the Muslims; for this reason there are no Muslims living among them. From Budfattan we sailed to Fanda-rayna [Panderani], a large and fine town with orchards and bazaars. The Muslims occupy three quarters in it, each of which has a mosque. It is at this town that the Chinese vessels pass the winter. Thence we travelled to the city of Qaliquet [Calicut], which is one of the chief ports in Mulaybar and one of the largest harbours in the world. It is visited by men from China, Sumatra, Ceylon, the Maldives, Yemen and Fars, and in it gather merchants from all quarters.

18. People at Cochin, Fel Hsin⁷¹

Men and women do their hair in a knot and wear a short shirt and a piece of cotton stuff wrapper around them.

There is a caste of people called Mu-kua (Mukuva); they have no dwellings but live in caves, or nests in the trees. They make their living by fishing in the

sea. Both sexes go with the body naked and with a girdle of leaves or grass hanging before and behind. If one of them meets someone, he must crouch down and hide himself by the way side, where he must wait until he has passed by.

In their customs they are very honest. Those walking along make way for each other; they will not pick up anything on the road. They have not the bastinado as a punishment, they draw a circle with lime on the ground which (the culprit) is forbidden (to pass beyond).

19. People at Honavar, Ibn Battuta⁷²

Next day we reached the town of Hinawr [Honavar, Onore], which is on a large inlet navigable for large ships. During the *pushkal*, which is the rainy season, this bay is so stormy that for four months it is impossible to sail on it except for fishing. The women of this town and all the coastal districts wear nothing but loose unsewn garments, one end of which they gird round their waists, and drape the rest over their head and shoulders. They are beautiful and virtuous, and each wears a gold ring in her nose. One peculiarity amongst them is that they all know the Koran by heart. I saw in the town thirteen schools for girls and twenty-three for boys, a thing which I have never seen elsewhere. Its inhabitants live by maritime commerce, and have no cultivated land. The ruler of Hinawr is Sultan Jalal ad-Din, who is one of the best and most powerful sultans. He is under the suzerainty of an infidel sultan named Haryab...The people of Mulaybar [Malabar] pay a fixed sum annually to Sultan Jala ad-Din, through fear of his sea-power. His army is composed of about six thousand men, horse and foot. On another occasion I stayed for eleven months at his court without ever eating bread, for their sole food is rice.

20. People at Vijayanagar richly adorned, Abder Razzak⁷³

This empire contains so great a population that it would be impossible to give an idea of it without entering into the most extensive details. In the king's palace are several cells, like basins, filled with bullion, forming one mass. All the inhabitants of this country, both those of exalted rank and of an inferior class, down to the artizans of the bazaar, wear pearls, or rings adorned with precious stones, in their ears, on their necks, on their arms, on the upper part of the hand, and on the fingers.

EASTERN INDIA

21. Magadha, Chau Ju-Kua⁷⁴

Concerning Wang-sho-ch'ong [Magadha], tradition says that north of Kiau-chi (Tongking), "one comes to Ta-li (Yun-nan) and west of Tali one comes to Wang-sho-ch'ong in less than forty days journey."...

P'ong-k'ie-lo of the West has a capital called Ch'a-na-ki [?]. The city walls are 120 *li* in circuit. The common people are combative and devoted solely to robbery. They use (pieces of) white conch shells ground into shape as money. The native products include fine swords, *to'u-lo* [tula, Sanskrit, cotton] cotton stuffs and common cotton cloth.

Some say that the law of the Buddha originated in this country for Huan-tsang, the master of the *Tripitaka* in the T'ang period, (when) he got the Buddhist Classic (to bring to China) had already reached the West.

22. The people of Bengal, Wang Ta-yuan⁷⁵

These people owe all their tranquility and prosperity to themselves, for its source lies in their devotion to agriculture, whereby a land originally covered with jungle has been reclaimed by their unremitting toil in tilling and planting...The riches and integrity of its people surpass, perhaps, those of Ch'iu-chiang (Palembang) and equal those of Chao-wa (Java).

23. An account by a Chinese envoy at Padua in 1415 AD⁷⁶

[The men] wear a white cotton turban and a long white cotton shirt. On their feet they wear low sheepskin shoes with gold thread. The smarter ones think it the correct thing to have designs on them. Everyone of them is engaged in business, the value of which may be ten thousand pieces of gold.

WESTERN INDIA

24. People of Hu-ch'a-la [the earliest reference to Gujarat in a Chinese work], Chau Ju-Kua⁷⁷

The inhabitants of this country are white and clean looking; both men and women wear double rings hanging down from holes in their ears; they wear close fitting clothes with a cotton sarong wrapped around them. On their heads they wear white hoods, and on their feet shoes of red leather. They are forbidden to eat flesh.

25. The Marathas, Ibn Battuta⁷⁸

The inhabitants of Dawlat Abad belong to the tribe of Marhata [Marathas], whose women God has endowed with special beauty, particularly in their noses and eyebrows. The infidels of this town are merchants, dealing principally in jewels, and their wealth is enormous. In Dawlat Abad there is an exceedingly fine and spacious bazaar for singers and singing-girls, containing numerous shops, each of which has a door leading to the house of its proprietor. The shop is beautified with carpets, and in the centre of it there is a sort of large cradle on which the singing-girl sits or reclines. She is adorned

with all kinds of ornaments and her attendants swing her cradle. In the centre of the bazaar there is a large carpeted and decorated pavilion in which the chief musician sits every Thursday after the afternoon prayer, with his servants and slaves in front of him. The singing-girls come in relays and sing and dance before him till the sunset prayer, when they withdraw. In the same bazaar there are mosques for the prayer-services. One of the infidel rulers in India used, on passing through this bazaar, to alight at the pavilion and the singing-girls used to sing before him. One of the Muhammadan sultans used to do the same.

We continued on our way to Nadhurbar (Nandur-bar], a small town inhabited by the Marhatas, who possess great skill in the arts and are physicians and astrologers. The nobles of the Marhatas are Brahmans and Katris [Kshatriyas]. Their food consists of rice, vegetables, and oil of sesame, and they do not hold with giving pain to or slaughtering animals. They wash themselves thoroughly before eating and do not marry among their relatives, unless those who are cousins six times removed. Neither do they drink wine, for this in their eyes is the greatest of vices.

26. People at Chaoul, a flourishing seaport before the Portuguese conquest, thirty miles south-east of Bombay, Athanasius Nikitin⁷⁹

This is an Indian country. People go about naked; with their heads uncovered and bare breasts; the hair tressed into one tail, and thick bellies. They bring forth children every year and the children are many; and men and women are black. When I go out many people follow me, and stare at the white man.

Their kniaz [Russian for chief] wears a *fata* [a silken garment] on the head; and another on the loins; the boyars wear it on the shoulders and on the loins; the *kniaginies* wear it also round the shoulders and the loins. The servants of the kniaz and of the boyars attach the *fata* round the loins, carrying in the hand a shield and a sword, or a scimitar, or knives, or a sabre, or a bow and arrows – but all naked and barefooted. Women walk about with their heads uncovered and their breasts bare. Boys and girls go naked till seven years, and do not hide their shame.

KASHMIR

27. The people of Kashmir, Rashidu-d Din⁸⁰

The people of Kashmir do not ride on quadrupeds, but are carried on men's shoulders in a Katut, which resembles a throne. The servants of the Government are always on the alert, and watch the passes and strongholds of the country. They do not allow strangers to enter the country, except by ones and twos. This prohibition extends even to Jews and Hindus, how then can anyone else gain admittance? The principal entrance is at Birahan, half way

between the Sind and Jailam. From that place to the bridge, at the confluence with the Jailam of the Kusari and Mamhari, which flow from the mountains of Shamilan, is eight parasangs. Thence you arrive, at a distance of five days' journey, at a defile through which the Jailam runs.

At the end of the defile lies Dawaru-l Marsad, on both sides of the river. There the Jailam enters the plains, and turns towards Adashtan [Puranadhishtana, the 'old chief city'], the capital of Kashmir, which it reaches at a distance of two days' journey. The city of Kashmir is four parasangs from Adashtan. It is built on both banks of the Jailam, on which there are many bridges and boats. The source of the Jailam is in the mountains of Harmakut, near the source of the Ganges. This mountain is impassable on account of the exceeding cold, for the snow never melts, even when the sun is in Cancer or Leo. On the other side of it lies Maha Chin, *i.e.*, great Chin. After the Jailam has left the mountains, it reaches Adashtan in two days. Four parasangs from that, it expands into a lake, a parasang square on the borders of which there is much cultivation, and a dense population. It then leaves the lake, and enters another defile near the city of Ushkara.

F. FESTIVALS

1. Festivals at Vijayanagar, Nicolo Conti⁸¹

Thrice in the year they keep festivals of especial solemnity. On one of these occasions the males and females of all ages, having bathed in the rivers or the sea, clad themselves in new garments, and spend three entire days in singing, dancing, and feasting. On another of these festivals they fix up within their temples, and on the outside on the roofs, an innumerable number of lamps of oil of Susimanni, which are kept burning day and night [On Dipavali oil lamps are lighted only at night not during daytime].

On the third, which lasts nine days [Mahanavami or Dasara], they set up in all the highways large beams, like the masts of small ships, to the upper part of which are attached pieces of very beautiful cloth of various kinds, interwoven with gold. On the summit of each of these beams is each day placed a man of pious aspect, dedicated to religion, capable of enduring all things with equanimity, who is to pray for the favour of God. These men are assailed by the people, who pelt them with oranges, lemons, and other odoriferous fruits, all which they bear most patiently. There are also three other festival days, during which they sprinkle all passers by, even the king and queen themselves, with saffron-water [probably description of 'holi'], placed for that purpose by the wayside. This is received by all with much laughter.

2. The Mahanadi festival at Vijayanagar, Abder Razzak⁸²

The idolaters, who exercise an imposing authority in this country, with a view of displaying their pride, their power, their tyranny, and their glory, prepare every year a royal feast, a banquet worthy of a sovereign. This solemnity bears the name of Mahanadi. The manner in which it is celebrated is as follows. In pursuance of orders issued by the king of Bidjanagar, the generals and principal personages from all parts of his empire, which extends over a space of three months' journey, presented themselves at the palace.

They brought with them a thousand elephants, resembling the waves of a troubled sea, or a stormy cloud, which were covered with brilliant armour, and with castles magnificently adorned, in which were jugglers and artificers. On the trunks and ears of these animals had been drawn, with cinnabar and other substances, extraordinary pictures and figures of wonderful beauty. When the chiefs of the army, with the eminent personages and learned Brahmins from each province, as well as the elephants, were collected at the appointed time in the palace, during three consecutive days, in the month of *Redjeb*, the vast space of land magnificently decorated, in which the enormous elephants were congregated together, presented the appearance of the waves of the sea, or of that compact mass of men which will be assembled together at the day of the resurrection. Over this magnificent space were erected numerous pavilions, to the height of three, four, and five stories, covered from top to bottom with figures in relief. They represented everything that the imagination can picture, men, wild beasts, birds, and animals of every kind, down to flies and gnats: everything was drawn with extraordinary skill and delicacy. Some of these pavilions were arranged in such a manner, that they could turn rapidly round and present a new face. At each moment a new chamber or a new hall presented itself to the view.

In the front of this place rose a palace with nine pavilions, magnificently ornamented. In the ninth the king's throne was set up. In the seventh was allotted a place to the humble author of this narrative, from which everyone was excluded excepting the author's friends. Between the palace and the pavilions, in an extremely beautiful situation, were musicians and storytellers, who sang and invented tales. The part of musicians is generally filled by women. Some young girls, with cheeks as full as the moon, and with faces more lovely than the spring, clothed in magnificent dresses, and showing features which, like the freshest rose, charmed every heart, were placed behind a pretty curtain opposite the king. On a sudden the curtain was raised and again fell, and the damsels arranged themselves for the dance, with a grace calculated to seduce every sense and captivate every mind. The jugglers execute some feats of skill which are quite wonderful: they place on the ground three pieces of wood, which touch each other, each of which is one cubit in length, half a cubit in breadth, and three

quarters of a cubit in height; on the top of the two first they place two other pieces, of nearly the same length and breadth, and above the second piece, which lies on the top of the first, they place another, a little smaller, so that the first and second pieces of wood form as it were steps by which to reach the third piece, which crowns the whole. A large elephant, trained to this exercise, stepping upon the first and second pieces of wood ascends the third, the surface of which is scarcely broader than the sole of one of the feet of this animal. While the elephant supports himself with his four feet upon this beam, they raise behind him the other pieces of wood. The animal once placed on the top of this beam, follows with his trunk all the airs which the musicians play, and moving in cadence with the time, raises and lowers his trunk alternately.

After this they erect a column of ten *ghez* in height, on the top of which they fix a long piece of wood, like the beam of a pair of scales, and which has a hole in the middle. At one end of this beam they attach a stone, the weight of which is equivalent to that of the elephant, and at the other end, at the distance of one *ghez* they place a broad plank, which is of one *ghez* in length; by means of a cord they lower the end to which the plank is fastened and on this the elephant mounts. His keeper then lets go the cord by little and little, until the two extremities of the piece of wood are exactly balanced, like the beams of a pair of scales, and at a height of ten *ghez*. This piece of wood, one end of which bears the elephant and the other a stone of corresponding weight, turns, after the fashion of a semicircle, making a half rotation from right to left, in presence of the king; and in this elevated position the elephant follows all the airs of the musicians, and makes the movements in cadence.

All the musicians, orators, and jugglers, receive from the king gold and suits of apparel. During three consecutive days, from the moment when the burning sun like a peacock of enchanting plumage displayed himself proudly in the midst of the heavens, until that in which the raven of darkness unfolded its wings, the royal festival, was prolonged in a style of the greatest magnificence.

It would be impossible, without entering into details of too great a length, to describe in this place the picture of the different kinds of fireworks, sports in which fireworks were employed and games and amusements which this fete presented. On the third day, at the moment when the king arose, the humble author of this narrative was conducted into the presence of the monarch. The throne, which was of an extraordinary size, was made of gold, and enriched with precious stones of extreme value; the whole workmanship was perfect in its delicacy and ingenuity. It is probable, that in all the kingdoms of the world, the art of inlaying precious stones is no where better understood than in this country.

Meeting with King

Before the throne was a square cushion, on the edges of which were sewn three rows of pearls of the most beautiful water. During the three days the king remained seated on this cushion behind the throne. When the fete of Mahanadi was ended, at the hour of evening prayer, the monarch sent to summon me. On my arrival at the palace I was introduced in the midst of four *estrades*, which were about ten *ghez* both in length and in breadth. The roof and the walls were entirely formed of plates of gold, enriched with precious stones.

Each of these plates was as thick as the blade of a sword, and was fastened with golden nails. Upon the *estrade*, in the front, is placed the throne of the king, and the throne itself is of very great size. The pomp of the king when seated thereon was most imposing. He questioned me on particular points respecting his majesty the happy Khakan, his emirs, his troops, the numbers of his horses, and also respecting his great cities, such as Samarcand, Herat, and Shirez. He expressed towards the emperor sentiments of the greatest friendship, and said to me: "I shall send, together with an able ambassador, some rows of elephants, two *tokouz* (twice nine) of eunuchs, and other presents."

G. FUNERAL CEREMONIES

1. Funeral rites, Alberuni⁸³

In the most ancient times the bodies of the dead were exposed to the air by being thrown on the fields without any covering; also sick people were exposed on the fields and in the mountains, and were left there. If they died there, they had the fate just mentioned; but if they recovered, they returned to their dwellings.

Thereupon there appeared a legislator who ordered people to expose their dead to the wind. In consequence they constructed roofed buildings with walls of rails, through which the wind blew, passing over the dead, as something similar is the case in the grave-towers of the Zoroastrians.

After they had practised this custom for a long time, Narayana prescribed to them to hand the dead over to the fire, and ever since they are in the habit of burning them, so that nothing remains of them, and every defilement, dirt and smell is annihilated at once, so as scarcely to leave any trace behind.

Greeks parallels

Nowadays the Slavonians, too, burn their dead, whilst the ancient Greeks seem to have had both customs, that of burning and that of burying. Socrates speaks in the book *Phaedo*, after Crito had asked him in what manner he wanted

to be buried: "As you wish, when you make arrangements for me. I shall not flee from you." Then he spoke to those around him: "Give to Crito regarding myself the opposite guarantee of that which he has given to the judges regarding myself; for he guaranteed to them that I should stay, whilst you now must guarantee that I shall not stay after death, I shall go away, that the look of my body may be tolerable to Crito when it is *burned* or *buried*, that he may not be in agony, and not say: 'Socrates is carried away, or is burned or buried.' Thou, O Crito, be at ease about the burial of my body. Do as thou likest, and especially in accordance with the laws."

Galenus says in his commentary to the apothegms of Hippocrates: "It is generally known that Asclepius was raised to the angels in a column of fire, the like of which is also related with regard to Dionysos, Heracles, and others, who laboured for the benefit of mankind. People say that God did thus with them in order to destroy the mortal and earthly part of them by the fire, and afterwards to attract to himself the immortal part of them, and to raise their souls to heaven."

In these words, too, there is a reference to the burning as a Greek custom, but it seems to have been in use only for the great men among them.

In a similar way the Hindus express themselves. There is a point in man by which he is what he is. This point becomes free when the mixed elements of the body are dissolved and scattered by combustion.

Fire nearest road to God

Regarding this return (of the immortal soul to God), the Hindus think that partly it is effected by the rays of the sun, the soul attaching itself to them and ascending with them, partly by the flame of the fire, which raises it (to God). Some Hindu used to pray that God would make his road to himself a straight line, because this is the nearest road, and that there is no other road upwards save the fire or the ray.

Similar to this is the practice of the Ghuzz Turks with reference to a drowned person; for they place the body on a bier in the river, and make a cord hang down from his foot, throwing the end of the cord into the water. By means of this cord the spirit of the deceased is to raise himself for resurrection.

The belief of the Hindus on this head was confirmed by the words of Vasudeva, which he spoke regarding the sign of him who is liberated from the fetters (of bodily existence). "His death takes place during *utta-rayana* (i.e. the northern revolution of the sun from the winter solstice to the summer solstice), during the white half of the month, *between lighted lamps*, i.e. between conjunction and opposition (new moon and full moon), in the seasons of winter and spring."

Similar views of Mani

A similar view is recognised in the following words of Mani: "The other religious bodies blame us because we worship sun and moon, and represent them as an image. But they do not know their real natures; they do not know that sun and moon are our path, the door whence we march forth into the world of our existence (into heaven), as this has been declared by Jesus." So he maintains.

People relate that Buddha had ordered the bodies of the dead to be thrown into flowing water. Therefore his followers, the Shamanians, throw their dead into the rivers.

Manner of burial

According to the Hindus, the body of the dead has the claim upon his heirs that they are to wash, embalm, wrap it in a shroud, and then to burn it with as much sandal and other wood as they can get. Part of his burned bones are brought to the Ganges and thrown into it, that the Ganges should flow over them, as it has flowed over the burned bones of the children of Sagara, thereby forcing them from hell and bringing them into paradise. The remainder of the ashes is thrown into some brook of running water. On the spot where the body has been burned they raise a monument similar to a milestone, plastered with gypsum. The bodies of children under three years are not burned.

Those who fulfil these duties towards the dead afterwards wash themselves as well as their dresses during two days, because they have become unclean by touching the dead.

Those who cannot afford to burn their dead will either throw them somewhere on the open field or into running water...

Tree of Prayag

At the junction of the two rivers, Yamuna and Ganges, there is a great tree called *Prayaga*, a tree of the species called *vata*. It is peculiar to this kind of tree that its branches send forth two species of twigs, some directed upward, as is the case with all other trees, and others directed downward like roots, but without leaves. If such a twig enters into the soil, it is like a supporting column to the branch whence it has grown. Nature has arranged this on purpose, since the branches of this tree are of an enormous extent (and require to be supported). Here the Brahmans and Kshatriyas are in the habit of committing suicide by climbing up the tree and throwing themselves into the Ganges.

Greek parallels

Johannes Grammaticus relates that certain people in ancient Greek heathendom, "whom I call the worshippers of the devil" – so he says – used

to beat their limbs with swords, and to throw themselves into the fire, without feeling any pain there from.

As we have related this as a view of the Hindus not to commit suicide, so also Socrates speaks: "Likewise it does not become a man to kill himself before the gods give him a cause in the shape of some compulsion or *dire necessity*, like that in which we now are."

Further he says: "We human beings are, as it were, in a prison. It does not behove us to flee nor to free ourselves from it, because the gods take notice of us, since we, the human beings, are servants to them."

2. Maha Brahmin funeral priests, Gardizi⁸⁴

Another group are the MAHABRI.FTI [Maha Brahmin, a despised section of Brahmins who perform funeral rites?]. Their custom is that a man goes to a graveyard and there collects the burnt bones of the dead. Then he enters a village and cries abusing the people: "O, rebels, o sinners, who have become captives of your passion and slaves of your nature and have succumbed (*uftada*) to the rebellion (*fitna*) of your passions. How long will you be killing your fathers and raping your mothers?" that is to say, "men and women will never reach repentance (*tauba na-yaband*) until they have become like me and trodden my path; let them know themselves and humble themselves in order to endear themselves (to God)".

3. Do not raise tombs, Al-Idrisi⁸⁵

The people of India burn their dead and do not raise tombs for them. When the king dies they construct a vehicle of an appropriate size, and raised about two palms above the ground. On this they place the bier surmounted by the crown, and the corpse, clad in all its funeral ornaments, being laid upon the bier, it is dragged by slaves all round the city. The head is uncovered and the hair drags upon the ground. This is done that every one may see (the corpse), and a herald goes before uttering, in the Indian language, words of which the following is the sense, – "People! behold your king, so and so by name, son of so and so. He lived happily and mightily for so many years. He is no more, and all that he possessed has escaped from his hands. Nothing now remains to him and he will feel no more pain. Remember, he has shown you the way which you must follow." This being said, when all the ceremonies are concluded, they take the corpse to the place where the bodies of kings are burnt, and commit it to the flames. These people do not grieve and lament very much on these occasions.

In all the countries of Hind and Sind there are Musulmans and they bury their dead secretly by night in their houses, but like the Indians they do not give way to long lamentations.

4. Embalming, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela⁸⁶

The inhabitants do not bury their dead, but embalm them with certain spices, put them upon stools and cover them with cloths, every family keeping apart. The flesh dries upon the bones and as these corpses resemble living beings, one of them recognises his parents and all the members of his family for many years to come.



Chapter 3

Languages, Literature, Science, Legal System

- A. Languages
- B. Literature
- C. Science
- D. Legal System

A. LANGUAGES

1. Language of Sindh different from that of India, Al Masudi¹

The language of Sind is different from that of India. Sind is the country which is nearer the dominions of the Moslims, India is farther from them. The inhabitants of Mankir, which is the capital of the Balhara, speak the Kiriya [Kannada] language, which has this name from Kira, the place where it is spoken. On the coast, as in Saimur, Subara, Tana, and other towns, a language called Lariya [an early form of Prakrit] is spoken which has its name from the sea which washes these countries [Sanskrit Lata, the region about the mouth of the Narmada]; and this is the Larawi sea, which has been described above.

2. Sanskrit – language of enormous range, Alberuni²

(Sanskrit is a language) of an enormous range, both in words and inflections, something like the Arabic, calling one and the same thing by various names, both original and derived, and using one and the same word for a variety of subjects, which, in order to be properly understood, must be distinguished from each other by various qualifying epithets, for nobody could distinguish between the various meanings of a word unless he understands the context in which it occurs, and its relation both to the following and the preceding parts of the sentence. The Hindus, like other people, boast of this enormous range

of their language, whilst in reality it is a defect.

Further, the language is divided into a neglected vernacular one, only in use among the common people, and a classical one, only in use among the upper and educated classes, which is much cultivated, and subject to the rules of grammatical inflection and etymology, and to all the niceties of grammar and rhetoric.

Besides, some of the sounds (consonants) of which the language is composed are neither identical with the sounds of Arabic and Persian, nor resemble them in any way. Our tongue and uvula could scarcely manage to correctly pronounce them, nor our ears in hearing to distinguish them from similar sounds, nor could we transliterate them with our characters. It is very difficult, therefore, to express an Indian word in our writing, for in order to fix the pronunciation we must change our orthographical points and signs, and must pronounce the case-endings either according to the common Arabic rules or according to special rules adapted for the purpose...

As in other foreign tongues, so also in Sanskrit, two or three consonants may follow each other without an intervening vowel – consonants which in our Persian grammatical system are considered as having a *hidden* vowel. Since most Sanskrit words and names begin with such consonants without vowel, we find it very difficult to pronounce them.

Besides, the scientific books of the Hindus are composed in various favourite metres, by which they intend, considering that the books soon become corrupted by additions and omissions to preserve them exactly as they are, in order to facilitate their being learned by heart, because they consider as canonical only that which is known by heart, not that which exists in writing. Now it is well known that in all metrical compositions there is much misty and constrained phraseology merely intended to fill up the metre and serving as a kind of patchwork, and this necessitates a certain amount of verbosity. This is also one of the reasons why a word has sometimes one meaning and sometimes another.

From all this it will appear that the metrical form of literary composition is one of the causes which make the study of Sanskrit literature so particularly difficult.

3. Instruments of writing, Alberuni³

The Hindus have in the south of their country a slender tree like the date and cocoanut palms, bearing edible fruits and leaves of the length of one yard, and as broad as three fingers, one put beside the other. They call these leaves *tari* (*tala* or *tar* = *Borassus flabelliformis*), and write on them. They bind a book of these leaves together by a cord on which they are arranged, the cord going through all the leaves by a hole in the middle of each.

In Central and Northern India people use the bark of the *tuz* tree, one kind of which is used as a cover for bows. It is called *bhurja*. They take a piece one yard long and as broad as the outstretched fingers of the hand, or somewhat less, and prepare it in various ways. They oil and polish it so as to make it hard and smooth, and then they write on it. The proper order of the single leaves is marked by numbers. The whole book is wrapped up in a piece of cloth and fastened between two tablets of the same size. Such a book is called *puthi* (*cf. pusta, pustaka*). Their letters, and whatever else they have to write, they write on the bark of the *tuz* tree.

Alphabet

As to the writing or alphabet of the Hindus...it once had been lost and forgotten; that nobody cared for it, and that in consequence people became illiterate, sunken into gross ignorance, and entirely estranged from science. But then Vyasa, the son of Parasara, rediscovered their alphabet of fifty letters by an inspiration of God. A letter is called *akshara*.

Some people say originally the number of their letters was less, and that it increased only by degrees. This is possible, or I should even say necessary...

The great number of the letters of the Hindu alphabet is explained, firstly, by the fact that they express every letter by a separate sign if it is followed by a vowel or a diphthong or a *hamza* (*visarga*), or a small extension of the sound beyond the measure of the vowel; and, secondly, the fact that they have consonants which are not found together in any other language, though they may be found scattered through different languages – sounds of such a nature that *our* tongues, not being familiar with them, can scarcely pronounce them, and that *our* ears are frequently not able to distinguish between many a cognate pair of them.

Write left to right like Greeks

The Hindus write from the left to the right like the Greeks. They do not write on the basis of a line, above which the heads of the letters rise whilst their tails go down below, as in Arabic writing. On the contrary, their ground-line is above, a straight line above every single character, and from this line the letter hangs down and is written under it. Any sign *above* the line is nothing but a grammatical mark to denote the pronunciation of the character above which it stands.

Siddhamatrika

The most generally known alphabet is called *Siddhamatrika* which is by some considered as *originating* from Kashmir, for the people of Kashmir use it. But it is also used in Varanasi. This town and Kashmir are the high schools of Hindu sciences. The same writing is used in Madhyadesa, *i.e.* the middle

country, the country all around Kanauj, which is also called Arya-varta.

Nagara

In Malava there is another alphabet called *Nagara*, which differs from the former only in the shape of the characters.

Ardhanagari

Next comes an alphabet called *Ardhanagari* i.e. half-nagara, so called because it is compounded of the former two. It is used in Bhatiya and some parts of Sindh.

Other alphabets

Other alphabets are the *Malwari*, used in Malwashau, in Southern Sind, towards the seacoast; the *Saindhava*, used in Bahmanwa or Almansura; the *Karnata*, used in Karnatadesa, whence those troops come which in the armies are known as *Kannara*; the *Andhri*, used in Andhradesa; the *Dirwari (Dravidi)*, used in Dirwara-desa (Dravidadesa); the *Lari*, used in Laradesa (Lata-desa); the *Gauri (Gaudi)*, used in Puryadesa, i.e. the Eastern country; the *Bhaikshuki*, used in Udunpur in Purvadesa. This last is the writing of Buddha.

On the word Om

The Hindus begin their books with *Om*, the word of creation, as we begin them with 'In the name of God.' The figure of the word *om* is...This figure does not consist of letters; it is simply an image invented to represent this word, which people use, believing that it will bring them a blessing, and meaning thereby a confession of the unity of God. Similar to this is the manner in which the Jews write the name of God, viz. by three Hebrew *yods*. In the Thora the word is written *YHVH* and pronounced *Adonai*; something they also say *Yah*. The word *Adonai*, which they pronounce is not expressed in writing.

Numerical signs

The Hindus do not use the letters of their alphabet for numerical notation, as we use the Arabic letters in the Hebrew alphabet. As in different parts of India the letters have different shapes, the numeral signs too, which are called *anka*, differ. The numeral signs which we use are derived from the finest forms of the Hindu signs. Signs and figures are of no use if people do not know what they mean, but the people of Kashmir mark the single leaves of their books with figures which look like drawings or like the Chinese characters, the meaning of which can only be learned by a very long practice. However, they do not use them when reckoning in the sand.

In arithmetic all nations agree that all the *order* of numbers (e.g. one,

ten, hundred, thousand) stand in a certain relation to the ten; that each order is the tenth part of the following and the tenfold of the preceding. I have studied the names of the *orders* of the numbers in various languages with all kinds of people with whom I have been in contact, and have found that no nation goes beyond the thousand. The Arabs, too, stop with the thousand, which is certainly the most correct and the most natural thing to do. I have written a separate treatise on this subject.

Those, however, who go beyond the thousand in their numeral system are the Hindus, at least in their arithmetical technical terms, which have been either freely invented or derived according to certain etymologies, whilst in others both methods are blended together. They extend the names of the *orders* of numbers until the 18th *order* for religious reasons, the mathematicians being assisted by the grammarians with all kinds of etymologies.

The 18th *order* is called *Parardha*, i.e., the half of heaven, or, more accurately, *the half of that which is above*. For if the Hindus construct periods of time out of Kalpas, the unit of this *order* is *a day of God* (i.e. a half *nnychthemeron*). And as we do not know any body larger than heaven, half of it (*parardha*), as *a half of the greatest body*, has been compared with *a half of the greatest day*. By doubling it, by uniting night to day, we get the *whole* of the greatest day. There can be no doubt that the name *Parardha* is accounted for in this way, and that *parar* means *the whole of heaven*...

Some Hindus maintain that there is a 19th *order* beyond the *Parardha*, called *Bhuri*, and that this is the limit of reckoning...

Numerical notations

The Hindus use the numeral signs in arithmetic in the same way as we do. I have composed a treatise showing how far possibly, the Hindus are ahead of us in this subject. Hindus compose their books in Slokas. If, now, they wish, in their astronomical handbooks, to express some numbers of the various *orders*, they express them by words used to denote certain numbers either in one *order* alone or at the same time in two *orders* (e.g. a word meaning either 20 or both 20 and 200). For each number they have appropriated quite a great quantity of words. Hence, if one word does not suit the metre, you may easily exchange it for a synonym which suits. Brahmagupta says; "If you want to write *one*, express it by everything which is unique, as *the earth, the moon*; *two* by everything which is double, as, e.g. *black and white*, *three* by everything which is threefold; *the nought* by *heaven*, the *twelve* by the names of the sun."...

4. The book, *Kyun yu Chun*, written in A.D. 1075 in Korea, points to the similarity of the Yi-do script with Sanskrit⁴

The Yi-do resembles the Sanskrit in its inflections.

5. Write on leaves, John of Monte Corvino⁵

They have indeed an alphabet which they use to keep their accounts, and to write prayers or charms for their idols; albeit they have no paper, but write upon leaves of trees like unto palm leaves.

6. Write perpendicularly, Nicolo Conti⁶

The inhabitants of Cambay alone use paper; all other Indians write on the leaves of trees, of which they make very beautiful books.

7. Art of writing, Abder Razzak⁷

The writing of this people is of two kinds: in one they write their letters with a kalam of iron upon a leaf of the Indian nut (the cocoa-nut tree), which is two *ghez* in length and two fingers in breadth. These characters have no colour, and the writing lasts but a short time. In the second kind of writing they blacken a white surface, they then take a soft stone, which they cut like a kalam, and which they use to form the letters; this stone leaves on the black surface a white colour, which lasts a very long time, and this kind of writing is held in high estimation.

8. Language in Bengal, Ma Huan⁸

[Bengali was] the language in universal use...[The Bengalis'] paper is white; it is made out of the bark of a tree, and is as smooth and glossy as deer's skin.

B. LITERATURE

1. Grammatical and metrical literature, Alberuni⁹

The two sciences of grammar and metrics are auxiliary to the other sciences. of the two, the former, grammar, holds the first place in their estimate, called *vyakarana*, i.e. the law of the correctness of their speech and etymological rules, by means of which they acquire an eloquent and classical style both in writing and reading. We Muslims cannot learn anything of it, since it is a branch coming from a root which is not within our grasp – I mean the language itself...

Chhanda

Grammar is followed by another science, called *Chandas*, i.e. the metrical form of poetry, corresponding our metrics – a science indispensable to them, since all their books are in verse. By composing their books in metres they intend to facilitate their being learned by heart, and to prevent people in all questions

of science ever recurring to a *written* text, save in a case of bare necessity. For they think that the mind of man sympathizes with everything in which there is symmetry and order, and has an aversion to everything in which there is no order. Therefore most Hindus are passionately fond of their verses, and always desirous of reciting them, even if they do not understand the meaning of the words, and the audience will snap their fingers in token of joy and applause. They do not want prose compositions, although it is much easier to understand them....

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

2. The Vedas, Puranas, and other works, Alberuni¹⁰

Veda means knowledge of that which was before unknown. It is a religious system which, according to the Hindus, comes from God, and was promulgated by the mouth of Brahman. The Brahmins recite the Veda without understanding its meaning and in the same way they learn it by heart, the one receiving it from the other. Only few of them learn its explanation, and still less is the number of those who master the contents of the Veda and their interpretation to such a degree as to be able to hold a theological disputation....

The Veda contains commandments and prohibitions, detailed statements about reward and punishment intended to encourage and to deter; but most of it contains hymns of praise, and treats of the various kinds of sacrifices to the fire, which are so numerous and difficult that you could hardly count them.

They do not allow the Veda to be committed to writing, because it is recited according to certain modulations, and they therefore avoid the use of the pen, since it is liable to cause some error, and may occasion an addition or a defect in the written text. In consequence it has happened that they have several times forgotten the Veda and lost it. For they maintain that the following passage occurs in the conversations between God and Brahman relating to the beginning of all things, according to the report of Saunaka who had received it from the planet Venus: "You will forget the Veda at the time when the earth will be submerged; it will then go down to the depths of the earth, and none but the fish will be able to bring it out again. Therefore I shall send the fish, and it will deliver the Veda into your hands. And I shall send the boar to raise the earth with its tusks and to bring it out of the water."

Further, the Hindus maintain that the Veda, together with all the rites of their religion and country, had been obliterated in the last Dvapara-yuga,...until it was renewed by Vyasa, the son of Parasara.

The *Vishnu Purana* says: "At the beginning of each Manvantara period there will be created anew a lord of a period whose children will rule over the whole earth, and a prince who will be the head of the world, and angels to whom men will bring fire-offerings, and the *Great Bear*, who will renew the

Veda which is lost at the end of each period."

This is the reason why, not long before our time, Vasukra, a native of Kashmir, a famous Brahmin, has of his own account undertaken the task of explaining the Veda and committing it to writing. He has taken on himself a task from which everybody else would have recoiled, but he carried it out because he was afraid that the Veda might be forgotten and entirely vanish out of the memories of men, since he observed that the characters of men grew worse and worse, and that they did not care much for virtue, nor even for duty...

As we have already mentioned, the books of the Hindus are metrical compositions like the Rajaz poems of the Arabs. Most of them are composed in a metre called *sloka*. The reason...being that a prose text is much more exposed to corruption than a metrical one...

According to their tradition, Vyasa divided it into four parts: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, and *Atharvaveda*.

Vyasa had four *sishya*, i.e. pupils. He taught a separate Veda to each of them, and made him carry it in his memory. They are enumerated in the same order as the four parts of the Veda: *Paila*, *Vaisampayana*, *Jaimini*, *Sumantu*.

The Rigveda

Each of the four parts has a peculiar kind of recitation. The first is *Rigveda*, consisting of metrical compositions called *ric*, which are of different lengths. It is called *Rigveda* as being the totality of the *ric*. It treats of the sacrifices to the fire, and is recited in three different ways. First, in a uniform manner of reading, just as every other book is read. Secondly, in such a way that a pause is made after every single word. Thirdly, in a method which is the most meritorious, and for which plenty of reward in heaven is promised. First you read a short passage, each word of which is distinctly pronounced; then you repeat it together with a part of that which has not yet been recited. Next you recite the added portion alone, and then you repeat it together with the next part of that which has not yet been recited. Continuing to do so till the end, you will have read the whole text twice.

The Yajurveda

The *Yajurveda* is composed of *kandin*. The word is a derivative noun, and means the totality of the *kandin*. The difference between this and the *Rigveda* is that it may be read as a text connected by the rules of *Samdhi*, which is not allowed in the case of *Rigveda*. The one as well as the other treats of works connected with the fire and the sacrifices...

The Samaveda

The Samaveda treats of the sacrifices, commandments, and prohibitions. It is recited in a tone like a chant, and hence its name is derived, because *saman* means *the sweetness of recitation*. The cause of this kind of recital is that Narayana, when he appeared on earth in the shape of Vamana, and came to the king Bali, changed himself into a Brahman and began to recite the Samaveda with a touching melody, by which he exhilarated the king, in consequence of which there happened to him the well-known story.

The Atharvanaveda

The Atharvanaveda is as a text connected by the rules of Samdhi. It does not consist of the same compositions as the Rig and Yajur Vedas, but of a third kind called *bhara*. It is recited according to a melody with a nasal tone. This Veda is less in favour with the Hindus than the others. It likewise treats of the sacrifices to the fire, and contains injunctions regarding the dead and what is to be done with them.

The Puranas

As to the Puranas, we first mention that the word means *first, eternal*. There are eighteen Puranas, most of them called by the names of animals, human or angelic beings, because they contain stories about them, or because the contents of the book refer in some way to them, or because the book consists of answers which the creature whose name forms the title of the book has given to certain questions. The Puranas are of human origin, composed by the so-called Rishis...

The Smriti

The book *Smriti* is derived from the Veda. It contains commandments and prohibitions, and is composed by...twenty sons of Brahman...

Other texts

Besides, the Hindus have books about the jurisprudence of their religion, on theosophy, on ascetics, on the process of becoming god and seeking liberation from the world, as, e.g. the book composed by Gauda the anchorite, which goes by his name; the book *Samkhya*, composed by Kapila, on divine subjects; the book of *Patanjali*, on the search for liberation and for the union of the soul with the object of its meditation; the book *Nyayabhasha*, composed by Kapila, on the Veda and its interpretation, also showing that it has been created, and distinguishing within the Veda between such injunctions as are obligatory only in certain cases, and those which are obligatory in general; further, the book *Mimamsa*, composed by Jaimini, on the same subject; the book *Laukayata*, composed by Brihaspati, treating of the subject that in all

investigations we must exclusively rely upon the apperception of the senses; the book *Agastyamata*, composed by Agastya, treating of the subject that in all investigations we must use the apperception of the senses as well as tradition; and the book *Vishnu-dharma*. The word *dharma* means reward, but in general it is used for religion; so that this title means *The religion of God*, who in this case is understood to be Narayana. Further, there are the books of the six pupils of Vyasa, viz. *Devala, Sukra, Bhargava, Vrihaspati, Yajavalkya*, and *Manu*. The Hindus have numerous books about all the branches of science. How could anybody know the titles of all of them, more especially if he is not a Hindu, but a foreigner?

The Mahabharata

Besides, they have a book which they hold in such veneration that they firmly assert that everything which occurs in other books is found also in this book, but not all which occurs in this book is found in other books. It is called *Bharata*, and composed by Vyasa, the son of Parasara at the time of the great war between the children of Pandu and those of Kuru. The title itself gives an indication of those times. The book has 100,000 slokas in eighteen parts, each of which is called *Parvan*...

These eighteen parts are followed by another one which is called *Harivamsa-Parvan*, which contains the traditions relating to Vasudeva.

In this book there occur passages which, like riddles, admit of manifold interpretations. As to the reason of this the Hindus relate the following story – Vyasa asked Brahman to procure him somebody who might write for him the *Bharata* from his dictation. Now he intrusted with this task his son Vinayaka, who is represented as an idol with an elephant's head, and made it obligatory on him never to cease from writing. At the same time Vyasa made it obligatory on him to write only that which he understood. Therefore Vyasa, in the course of his dictation, dictated such sentences as compelled the writer to ponder over them, and thereby Vyasa gained time for resting awhile.

C. SCIENCE

INDIAN NUMERALS

1. It is generally believed that Indian numerals with place value were introduced to the West about A.D. 773, when an Indian pandit, Kankah, brought the astronomical *Sindhind* to the court of al-Mansur at Baghdad. However, a passage from the Syrian writer Severus Sebokt [A.D. 662] provides the earliest known reference

to Indian numerals outside India¹¹

The subtle discoveries of the Hindus in astronomy, discoveries which are more ingenious than those of the Greeks and the Babylonians, and their clever method of calculation, their computation which surpasses words, I mean that which is made with nine signs...[The reference to nine signs does not necessarily prove the absence of zero. Till the sixteenth century, a distinction was maintained between the nine signs and zero].

2. Al-Khwarizmi [died A.D. 850] wrote a book on the Indian method of reckoning which formed the basis of Arabic mathematics for several centuries. Rabbi Ben Ezra [b. 1095] remarked on al-Khwarizmi's use of Hindu methods¹²

[al-Khwarizmi] and all later Arabic scholars do their multiplications, divisions, and extraction of roots as is written in the book of the (Hindu) scholar which they possess in translation.

3. Literature on sciences, Alberuni¹³

ASTRONOMY

If a science or an idea has once conquered the whole earth, every nation appropriates part of it. So do also the Hindus. Their belief about the cyclical revolutions of times is nothing very special, but is simply in accordance with the results of scientific observation.

The science of astronomy is the most famous among them, since the affairs of their religion are in various ways connected with it. If a man wants to gain the title of an astronomer, he must not only know scientific or mathematical astronomy, but also astrology. The book known among Muslims as *Sindhind* is called by them *Siddhanta*, i.e. straight, not crooked nor changing. By this name they call every standard book on astronomy, even such books as, according to our opinion, do not come up to the mark of our so-called *Zij*, i.e. handbooks of mathematical astronomy. They have five *Siddhantas* :-

- I. *Surya-siddhanta*, i.e. the *Siddhanta* of the sun, composed by Lata.
- II. *Vasisha-siddhanta*, so called from one of the stars of the Great Bear, composed by Vishnucandra.
- III. *Pulisa-siddhanta*, so called from Paulisa, the Greek, from the city of Saintra, which I suppose to be Alexandria, composed by Pulisa.
- IV. *Romaka-siddhanta*, so called from the Rum, i.e. the subject of the Roman Empire, composed by Srishena.
- V. *Brahma-siddhanta*, so called from Brahman, composed by Brahmagupta, the son of Jishnu, from the town of Bhillamala between

Multan and Anhilwara, 16 *yojana* from the latter place (?).

The authors of these books draw from one and the same source, the Book *Paithamaha*, so called from the *first father*; i.e. Brahman.

Varahamihira has composed an astronomical hand-book of small compass called *Panca-siddhantika*, which name ought to mean that it contains the pith and marrow of the preceding five Siddhantas. But this is not the case, nor is it so much better than they as to call the most correct one of the five. So the name does not indicate anything but the fact that the number of Siddhantas is five.

Brahmagupta says: "Many of the Siddhantas are Surya, others Indu, Pulisa, Romaka, Vasishtha, and Yavana, i.e. the Greeks; and though the Siddhantas are many, they differ only in words, not in the subject-matter. He who studies them properly will find that they agree with each other."

Up to the present time I have not been able to procure any of these books, save those of Pulisa, and of Brahmagupta. I have commenced translating them, but have not yet finished my work...

Tantra

Such books as do not reach the standard of a Siddhanta are mostly called *Tantra* or *Karana*. The former means *ruling under a governor*; the latter means *following*, i.e. following behind the Siddhanta. Under *governors* they understand the *Acaryas*, the sages, anchorites, the followers of Brahman.

There are two famous *Tantras* by *Aryabhata* and *Balabhadra*, besides the *Rasayana-tantra* by *Bhanu-yasas* (?)...

As for *Karanas*, there is one (*lacuna*) called by his name, besides the *Karana-khanda-khadyaka* by Brahmagupta...

Samhita

Samhita, means *that which is collected*, books containing something of everything, e.g. forewarnings relating to a journey derived from meteorological occurrences; prophecies regarding the fate of dynasties; the knowledge of lucky and unlucky things; prophesying from the lines of the hand; interpretation of dreams, and taking auguries from the flight or cries of birds. For Hindu scholars believe in such things. It is the custom of their astronomers to propound in their Samhitas also the whole science of meteorology and cosmology.

Jatakas

Each one of the following authors has composed a book, *Jataka*, i.e. book of nativities, viz.:-

Parasara, Jivasarman, Satya, Mau, the Greek, Manittha,

Varahamihira has composed two Jatakas, a small and a large one. The

latter of these has been explained by Balabhadra, and the former I have translated into Arabic. Further, the Hindus have a large book on the science of the astrology of nativities called *Saravali*, i.e. the chosen one, similar to the *Vazidaj* (= Persian *guzida?*), composed by Kalyana-Varman, who gained high credit for his scientific works. But there is another book still larger than this, which comprehends the whole of astrological sciences, called *Yavana*, i.e. belonging to the Greeks.

Of Varahamihira there are several small books, e.g. *Shatpancasika*, fifty-six chapters on astrology; *Hora-panca-hotriya* (?), on the same subject.

Travelling is treated of in the book *Yogayatra* and the book *Tikani(?)-yatra*, marriage and marrying in the book *Vivaha-patala*, architecture in the book (*lacuna*)...

Medicine

Medicine belongs to the same class of sciences as astronomy, but there is this difference, that the latter stands in close relation to the religion of the Hindus. They have a book called by the name of its author, i.e. *Caraka*, which they consider as the best of their whole literature on medicine. According to their belief, Caraka was a Rishi in the last Dvapara-yuga, when his name was *Agnivesa*, but afterwards he was called *Caraka*, i.e., the intelligent one, after the first elements of medicine had been laid down by certain Rishis, the children of *Sutra*. These latter had received them from Indra, Indra from Asvin, one of the two physicians of the Devas, and Asvin had received them from Prajapati, i.e. Brahman, *the first father*. This book has been translated into Arabic for the princes of the house of the Barmecides.

The Panchatantra

The Hindus cultivate numerous other branches of science and literature, and have a nearly boundless literature. I, however, could not comprehend it with my knowledge. I wish I could translate the book *Pancatantra*, known among us as the book of Kalila and Dimna. It is far spread in various languages, in Persian, Hindi, and Arabic – in translations of people who are not free from the suspicion of having altered the text...

4. Science of Rasayana, Alberuni¹⁴

They have a science similar to alchemy which is quite peculiar to them. They call it *Rasayana*, a word composed with *rasa*, i.e. gold. It means an art which is restricted to certain operations, drugs, and compound medicines, most of which are taken from plants. Its principles restore the health of those who were ill beyond hope, and give back youth to fading old age, so that people become again what they were in the age near puberty; white hair becomes

black again, the keenness of the senses is restored as well as the capacity for juvenile agility, and even for cohabitation, and the life of people in this world is even extended to a long period. And why not? Have we not already mentioned on the authority of Patanjali...that one of the methods leading to liberation is *Rasayana*? What man would hear this, being inclined to take it for truth, and not dart off into foolish joy and not honour the master of such a wonderful art by popping the choicest bit of his meal into his mouth?

A famous representative of this art was Nagarjuna, a native of the fort Daihak, near Somanath. He excelled in it, and composed a book which contains the substance of the whole literature on this subject, and is very rare. He lived nearly a hundred years before our time...

5. The zodiac, Alberuni¹⁵

We have already mentioned, near the beginning of the book, that the language of the Hindus is extremely rich in nouns, both original and derivative, so that in some instances they call *one* thing by a multitude of different names. So I have heard them saying that they have a thousand names all meaning *sun*; and, no doubt, each planet has quite as many, or nearly as many names, since they could not do with less (for the purposes of versification).

The names of the weekdays are the best known. The names of the planets connected with the word *bara*, which follows after the planet's name, as in Persian the word *shambih* follows after the number of the weekday (*dushambih*, *sihshambih*, & c), So they say :

Aditya bara, i.e. Sunday.

Soma bara, i.e. Monday.

Mangala bara, i.e. Tuesday.

Budha bara, i.e. Wednesday.

Brihaspati bara, i.e. Thursday.

Sukra bara, i.e. Friday.

Sanaiscara bara, i.e. Saturday.

And thus they go on counting, beginning anew with Sunday, Monday, & c...

The Greeks mark the planets with figures, to fix by their limits on the *astrolabe* in an easily intelligible manner, images which are not letters of the alphabet. The Hindus use a similar system of abridgement; however, their figures are not images invented for the purpose, but the initial characters of the names of the planets, e.g. *a* = *Aditya*, or the Sun; *c* = *Candra*, or the Moon; *b* = *Budha*, or Mercury...

The names of the months are related to those of the lunar stations. As two or three stations belong to each month, the name of the month is derived from one of them.

The signs of the zodiac have names corresponding to the images which they represent, and which are the same among the Hindus as among all other nations. The third sign is called *Mithuna*, which means a pair consisting of a boy and a girl; in fact, the same as *the Twins*, the well-known image of this sign...

6. Hindu calendar, Nicolo Conti¹⁶

They divide the year into twelve months, which they name after the signs of the zodiac. The area is computed variously. The greater part date its commencement from Octavian, in whose time there was peace all over the world. But they call 1,400, 1,490.

7. Traditions relating to the Poles, Alberuni¹⁷

The pole, in the language of the Hindus, is called *dhruba* and the axis *salaka*. The Hindus, with the exception to their astronomers, speak always only *one* pole, the reason of which is their belief in *the dome of heaven*, as we have heretofore explained. According to *Vayu-Purana*, heaven revolves round the pole like a potter's wheel, and the pole revolves round itself, without changing its own place. This revolution is finished in 30 *muhurta*, i.e. in one *nychthemeron*...

8. The accomplishments of the people [adab], Gardizi¹⁸

Their sciences and accomplishments are manifold. One of them is charms (*afsun*). It is reported that, should they be willing, they will what they wish. With their charms they heal, and, whatever limb it be, they expel illness from it and pass it over to some other person. Another accomplishment is telepathy (lit. 'imagination and thought'), and it is reported that by it they obtain wonders and address words to the absent by means of telepathy, and thus it happens. By persuasion and telepathy (*i'tqad-va-guman*) and show phantoms by which great sages are perplexed (reading *tahayyur* for *tamiz*). They also have a procedure called *simaband* (spelt *sh.mat.nt*) which refers to the wonderful talismans which they make. They recite incantations (*khwanish* 'hymns'?) tantamount to talismans and they impart these incantations to their disciples. Of these incantations one particularly astonishing is (that) stopping hail (*ihala*), which they chase from one place to another. And thus they make contracts with villages and other places for protecting them against hail. They make contracts from year to year, and, should someone refrain, they will send hail against his land.

Another incantation (*khwanish*) is against snake-poison, which they remove from a man's body. Hamd ibn valak (?) GARDIZI told me that a man was bitten by a snake; thereupon (*bar jay*) he grew old and became like a

corpse and they wanted to bury him. Meanwhile, an Indian came up and said: "he has fainted but has not died". He then kept reciting a spell (*afsum bi-khwandan istad*) and that man recovered his senses. (The Indian) brought out the poison from where the snake bit him and the man got up and walked away.

And they produce many similar wonders, by means of reciting spells (*afsun khwandan*). And they have a medical science the like of which no one has seen in the lands of Islam. Their claims in it are numerous, such as to maintain health, to avert illness, to put off senility, to increase sexual power, and besides, to restrain (*baz-dashtan*) inveterate ailments – such as some of our friends have witnessed ourselves have heard.

(Among) the wonders (are their) mathematics, geodesy, geometry, and astronomy, in which their science and authority (*sangi ?*) have reached a degree which it is impossible to explain for it is superhuman.

9. Science denominated physiognomy, Marco Polo¹⁹

In this country there are many adepts in the science denominated physiognomy, which teaches the knowledge of the nature and qualities of men, and whether they tend to good or evil. These qualities are immediately discerned upon the appearance of the man or woman. They also know what events are portended by meeting certain beasts or birds. More attention is paid by these people to the flight of birds than by any others in the world, and from thence they predict good or bad fortune. In every day of the week there is one hour which they regard as unlucky, and this they name *choiach*; thus, for example, on Monday the (canonical) hour of *mi-tierce*, on Tuesday the hour of *tierge*, on Wednesday the hour of *none*; and on these hours they do not make purchases, nor transact any kind of business, being persuaded that it would not be attended with success. In like manner they ascertain the qualities of every day throughout the year, which are described and noted in their books. They judge of the hour of the day by the length of a man's shadow when he stands erect. When an infant is born, be it a boy or a girl, the father or the mother makes a memorandum in writing of the day of the week on which the birth took place; also of the age of the moon, the name of the month, and the hour. This is done because every future act of their lives is regulated by astrology.

D. LEGAL SYSTEM

1. Test of fire, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²⁰

In India if a person makes a claim against another person in which capital punishment is necessary, the plaintiff is asked: 'Will you endure [the test of]

fire?' When he says 'yes', then a piece of iron is heated to such an intensity that it becomes incandescent (lit. the fire appears in it). Then he is asked: 'Spread out your hand.' Then seven leaves of a tree found there are placed on his hand. Then the [hot] piece of iron is placed over the leaf. He then walks with it forwards and backwards until he drops it. Then a leather bag is fetched and his hand is put inside it. It is sealed with the royal seal. After three days, unpeeled rice is brought and he is asked to remove the husk from it. If this has no effect on his hand, he succeeds, and there is no death sentence against him, and the accused is compelled to pay a fine of one maund of gold which the Sultan appropriates for himself. Sometimes they boil water in an urn of iron or copper to such a degree that no one can even go near it. Then they cast an iron ring in it, and he [the plaintiff] is asked to put his hand inside it and to take the ring out. I have seen a person putting his hand in it and then taking it out unhurt [lit. healthy]. In this case also, the plaintiff has to pay one maund of gold.

2. Administer justice without arbiter, Al-Idrisi²¹

[The Indians] administer justice among themselves without any recourse to a judge or an arbitrator. They do all this naturally, by force of habit and character in which they are brought up and to which they are accustomed.

3. Justice in Chola kingdom, Chau Ju-Kua²²

When anyone among the people is guilty of an offence one of the Court Ministers punishes him; if the offence is light, the culprit is tied to a wooden frame and given fifty, seventy, or up to an hundred blows with a stick. Heinous crimes are punished with decapitation or by being trampled to death by an elephant.

4. Crime and punishment, sati, Marco Polo²³

The following extraordinary custom prevails at this place. When a man who has committed a crime, for which he has been tried and condemned to suffer death, upon being led to execution, declares his willingness to sacrifice himself in honour of some particular idol, his relations and friends immediately place him in a kind of chair, and deliver to him twelve knives of good temper and well sharpened. In this manner they carry him about the city, proclaiming, with a loud voice, that this brave man is about to devote himself to a voluntary death, from motives of zeal for the worship of the idol. Upon reaching the place where the sentence of the law would have been executed, he snatches up two of the knives, and crying out, "I devote myself to death in honour of such an idol," hastily strikes one of them into each thigh, then one into each arm, two into the belly, and two into the breast. Having in this manner thrust all the knives but one into different parts of his body, repeating at every wound

the words that have been mentioned, he plunges the last of them into his heart, and immediately expires. As soon as this scene has been acted, his relations proceed, with great triumph and rejoicing, to burn the body; and his wife, from motives of pious regard for her husband, throws herself upon the pile, and is consumed with him. Women who display this resolution are much applauded by the community, as, on the other hand, those who shrink from it are despised and reviled.

5. Payment of debt, Marco Polo²⁴

Offences in this country are punished with strict and exemplary justice, and with regard to debtors the following customs prevail. If application for payment shall have been repeatedly made by a creditor, and the debtor puts him off from time to time with fallacious promises, the former may attach his person by drawing a circle round him, from whence he dare not depart until he has satisfied his creditor, either by payment, or by giving adequate security. Should he attempt to make his escape, he renders himself liable to the punishment of death, as a violator of the rules of justice. Messer Marco, when he was in this country on his return homeward, happened to be an eyewitness of a remarkable transaction of this nature. The king was indebted in a sum of money to a certain foreign merchant, and although frequently importuned for payment, amused him for a long time with vain assurances. One day when the king was riding on horse-back, the merchant took the opportunity of inscribing a circle round him and his horse. As soon as the king perceived what had been done, he immediately ceased to proceed, nor did he move from the spot until the demand of the merchant was fully satisfied. The bystanders beheld what passed with admiration, and pronounced that king to merit the title of most just, who himself submitted to the laws of justice.

6. Oaths allowed, Nicolo Conti²⁵

In criminal charges oaths are allowed, where there is no witness to prove the offence. There are three modes of swearing. In one, the person to whom the oath is administered stands before the idol, and swears by the idol that he is innocent. Having taken the oath, he then licks with his tongue a piece of iron, such as a mattock, red hot; if he escape uninjured he is declared innocent. Others again, having first taken the oath, carry the same piece of iron, or a red hot iron plate for several paces before the idol; if burnt in any part he is punished as guilty, if he escape unhurt he is exempt from the punishment awarded for the offence. There is a third manner of swearing, and this is the most common of all. A vessel is placed before the idol filled with boiling butter. He who swears that he is innocent of the offence charged against him, plunges two fingers into the butter, which are immediately wrapped up in linen and a seal

impressed upon it, to prevent the covering being removed. On the third day the bandage is taken off. If any injury appear upon the fingers the accused is punished; if no injury present itself he is released.

7. Trial by ordeal at Calicut, Ma Huan²⁶

Trial by ordeal is much practiced in this country, such as thrusting the finger of the accused into boiling oil, and then keeping him in jail for two or three days. If after that time the finger is ulcerated he is pronounced guilty and sentenced to punishment; but if his finger has received no injury he is at once set free, and escorted home by musicians engaged by the overseer. On his arrival home his relatives, neighbours, and friends make him presents and rejoice and feast together.



Chapter 4

State of Economy

- A. Some important cities and ports
- B. Ships and navigation
- C. Pearl fishery
- D. Communications
- E. Artisans
- F. Weights and measures
- G. Currency
- H. Prices and markets

A. SOME IMPORTANT CITIES AND PORTS

1. Multan, Ibn Khurdadhbih¹

Al-Multan was named ‘Frontier-place of the House of Gold’ (*Farj Bayt al-Dhahab*), because Muhammad b. al-Qasim, the lieutenant of Hajjaj b. Yusuf, had obtained forty *bhar* of gold from a house there. One *bhar* is equal to three hundred and thirty-three *mann*. It was for this reason that the town was named ‘Frontier-place of the House of Gold’. [The word] *al-farj* is synonymous with *al-thaghr* [frontier]. The quantity of the gold obtained was 2,37,600 *mithqal*...From al-Sind costus, qana and al-khayzuran (bamboos) are imported.

2. Muslims enriched by gold of Multan, Ibn Haukal²

The reason why Multan is designated “the boundary of the house of gold” is, that the Muhammadans, though poor at the time they conquered the place, enriched themselves by the gold which they found in it.

3. Multan, *Subh-ul-A'sha*³

It is situated in the third of the seven climates...It has been mentioned in *Masalik ul-Absar* on the authority of some works that the villages of Multan are 126,000.

4. Aror [Azur], *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁴

Aror: The author of *Al-Azizi* says, it is a big city and its inhabitants are Muslims who are under the rule of the Governor of Mansura.

5. Mansura [old Brahmanabad, Sind], Al-Idrisi⁵

Mansura occupies a space of a mile square. The climate is hot. The country produces dates and sugar canes in abundance. There are hardly any other fruits, if we except one, a sort of fruit called laimun, as big as an apple and of a very sour taste, and another which resembles the peach both in shape and taste. Mansura was built at the beginning of the reign of Al Mansur; of the Abbaside family. This prince gave his name ('the victorious') to four different cities, as a good augury that they might stand forever. The first was Baghdad in 'Irak; the second, Mansura in Sind; the third, Al Masisa, on the Mediterranean; the fourth, that of Mesopotamia. That of which we are now speaking is great, populous, rich, and commercial. Its environs are fertile. The buildings are constructed of bricks, tiles, and plaster. It is a place of recreation and of pleasure. Trade flourishes. The bazaars are filled with people, and well stocked with goods. The lower classes wear the Persian costume, but the princes wear tunics, and allow their hair to grow long like the princes of India. The money is silver and copper. The weight of the drachma (dinar) is five times that of the (ordinary) drachma. The Tatariya coins also are current here. Fish is plentiful, meat is cheap, and foreign and native fruits abound. The name of this city in Indian is Mirman. It is considered one of the dependencies of Sind, like Debal, Nirun, Bania, Kalari, Atri, Sharusan, Jandaur, Manhabari [Manjabari], Basmak and Multan.

6. Debal [a famous seaport of Sind on the site of modern Karachi, named after a Buddhist temple *devalya*, destroyed by Muslims in 711 A.D.], Al-Idrisi⁶

This is a populous place, but its soil is not fertile, and it produces scarcely any trees except the date-palm. The highlands are arid and the plains sterile. Houses are built of clay and wood, but the place is inhabited only because it is a station for the vessels of Sind and other countries. Trade is carried on in a great variety of articles, and is conducted with much intelligence. Ships laden with the production of Uman, and the vessels of China and India come to Debal. They bring stuffs and other goods from China, and the perfumes and

aromatics of India. The inhabitants of Debal, who are generally rich, buy these goods in the bulk, and store them until the vessels are gone and they become scarce. Then they begin to sell, and go trading into the country, putting their money out on interest, or employing it as may seem best.

7. Nirun [the old name of modern Haidarabad, Sind], *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁷

Nirun: The author of *Al-Lubab* says, "it is a city in the district of Daybul between the latter and Mansura and situated in the second of the seven climates."...

Ibn Said says, "it is one of the ports of the country of Sind and on which their saltish bay lies that comes out of the Persian Sea. The author of *Al Azizi* says, "its inhabitants are Muslims. Ibn Hauqal says, "it is a fertile place with abundant wealth and big bazars; around it there are many towns and markets.

8. Makran, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁸

Ibn Hauqal says, "it is a broad and extensive region; consisting mostly of deserts and barren and arid plains."...Its capital is Tiz. It is situated in the second of the seven climates...Ibn Hauqal says, "it is the seaport of Mukran and those districts."

9. Lahari, south-east of Karachi [ruins of Debal?], Ibn Battuta⁹

After five days' travelling we reached 'Ala al-Mulk's province, Lahari, a fine town on the coast where the river of Sind discharges itself into the ocean. It possesses a large harbour, visited by men from Yemen, Fars, and elsewhere. For this reason its contributions to the Treasury and its revenues are considerable; the governor told me that the revenue from this town amounted to sixty lakhs per annum. The governor receives a twentieth part of this, that being the footing on which the sultan commits the provinces to his governors. I rode out one day with 'Ala al-Mulk, and we came to a plain called Tarna, seven miles from Lahari, where I saw an innumerable quantity of stones in the shape of men and animals. Many of them were disfigured and their forms effaced, but there remained a head or a foot or something of the sort. Some of the stones also had the shape of grains of wheat, chickpeas, beans and lentils, and there were remains of a city wall and house walls. We too saw the ruins of a house with a chamber of hewn stones, in the midst of which there was a platform of hewn stones resembling a single block, surmounted by a human figure, except that its head was elongated and its mouth on the side of its face and its hands behind its back like a pinioned captive. The place had pools of stinking water and an inscription on one of its walls in Indian characters. 'Ala al-Mulk told me that the historians relate that in this place there was a great city whose inhabitants were so depraved that

they were turned to stone, and that it is their king who is on the terrace in the house, which is still called 'the king's palace.' They add that the inscription gives the date of the destruction of the people of that city, which occurred about a thousand years ago.

10. Bakar and Uch, Ibn Battuta¹⁰

Bakar [is] a fine city intersected by a channel from the river of Sind. Thereafter I travelled from Bakar to the large town of Uja [Uch] which lies on the bank of the river and has fine bazaars and buildings.

11. Abohar first town after Multan, Ibn Battuta¹¹

The first town we reached after leaving Multan was Abuhar [Abohar] which is the first town in India proper, and thence we entered a plain extending for a day's journey.

12. Sirsa, Ibn Battuta¹²

Let us return to our original topic. We set out from the town of Ajudahan, and after four days' march reached Sarasati [Sarsuti or Sirsa], a large town with quantities of rice of an excellent sort which is exported to the capital Delhi.

13. Kambay, Al-Idrisi¹³

Kambaya stands three miles from the sea, and is very pretty. It is well known as a naval station. Merchandise from every country is found here, and is sent on from hence to other countries. It is placed at the extremity of a bay, where vessels can enter and cast anchor. It is well supplied with water, and there is a fine fortress erected by the government of India to prevent the inroads of the inhabitants of the island of Kish. From Kambaya to the isle of Aubkin, two-and-a-half days' sail. From Aubkin to Debal, two days. Kambaya is fertile in wheat and rice. Its mountains produce the Indian kana. The inhabitants are idolaters.

14. Of the kingdom of Kambaia [Cambay]. Marco Polo¹⁴

This also is an extensive kingdom, situated towards west, governed by its own king, who pays no tribute to any other, and having its proper language. The people are idolaters. In this country the north-star is seen still higher than in any of the preceding, in consequence of its lying further to the north-west. The trade carried on is very considerable, and a great quantity of indigo is manufactured. There is abundance of cotton cloth, as well as of cotton in the wool. Many skins well dressed are exported from hence, and the returns are received in gold, silver, copper, and tutty.

15. Cambay, Ibn Battuta¹⁵

Thereafter we travelled to the town of Kinbaya [Cambay], which is situated on an arm of the sea resembling a river; it is navigable for ships and its waters ebb and flow. I myself saw the ships there lying on the mud at ebb-tide and floating on the water at high tide. This city is one of the finest there is in regard to the excellence of its construction and the architecture of its mosques. The reason is that the majority of its inhabitants are foreign merchants, who are always building fine mansions and magnificent mosques and vie with one another in doing so.

16. Cambay, Nicolo Conti¹⁶

Cambay is situated near to the sea, and is twelve miles in circuit; it abounds in spikenard, lac, indigo, myrobalans, and silks.

17. Cambay, Athanasius Nikitin¹⁷

Cambayat is a port of the whole Indian sea, and a manufacturing place for every sort of goods; as talach [long gowns], damask, khan [a sort of silk], kiota [blankets], and there they prepare the blue stone colour.

18. Subara [Sopara, near Bassein in Thana district], Al-Idrisi¹⁸

Subara is situated one-and-a-half mile from the sea. It is a populous, busy town, and is considered one of the entrepots of India. They fish for pearls here. It is in the vicinity of Bara, a small island, on which some cocoa-nut trees and the costus grow. From Subara to Sindan is considered five days.

19. Sindan [Sanjan, north of Thana, Bombay], Al-Idrisi¹⁹

Sindan is a mile-and-a-half from the sea. It is populous, and the people are noted for their industry and intelligence. They are rich and of a warlike temper. The town is large, and has an extensive commerce both in exports and imports. East of Sindan there is an island bearing the same name and dependent on India. It is large and well cultivated, and the cocoanut palm, kana, and rattan grow there.

20. Saimur [modern Chaul in Colaba district Bombay], Al-Idrisi²⁰

Saimur, five days from Sindan, is a large well-built town. Cocoanut trees grow here in abundance; henna also grows here, and the mountains produce many aromatic plants, which are exported.

21. Saimur, Zakariya Al Kazwini²¹

Saimur – A city of Hind near the confines of Sind. The people are very beautiful and handsome, from being born of Turk and Indian parents. There

are Musulmans, Christians, Jews, and Fire-worshippers there. The merchandize of the Turks is conveyed hither, and the aloes called Saimuri are named from this place. The temple of Saimur is an idol temple, on the summit of a high eminence, under the charge of keepers. There are idols in it of turquoise and baijadak, which are highly venerated. In the city there are mosques, Christian churches synagogues, and Fire temples. The infidels do not slaughter animals, nor do they eat flesh, fish, or eggs; but there are some who will eat animals that have fallen down precipices, or that have been gored to death, but they do not eat those that have died a natural death. This information has been derived from Mis'ar bin Muhalhil, author of the *Ajaibu-1 buldan*, who travelled into various countries and recorded their wonders.

22. The island of Kish which marked the limit of the voyages of Indian merchants trading with Persia and the West, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela²²

[Kish is] a considerable market, being the point to which Indian merchants and those of the island bring their commodities; while the traders of Mesopotamia, Yemen and Persia import all sorts of silk and purple cloths, flax, cotton, hemp, mash (a kind of pea), wheat, barley, millet, rye and all sorts of comestibles and pulse, which articles form objects of exchange; those from India import great quantities of spices, and the inhabitants of the island live by what they gain in their capacity of brokers to both parties. The island contains about five hundred Jews.

23. Quilon, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela²³

They [The people of Quilon] are descendants of Khush, are addicted to astrology, and are all black. This nation is very trustworthy in matters of trade, and whenever foreign merchants enter their port, three secretaries of the king immediately repair on board their vessels, write down their names and report them to him. The king thereupon grants them security for property, which they may even leave in the open fields without any guard.

One of the king's officers sits in the market, and receives goods that may have been found anywhere, and which he returns to those applicants who can minutely describe them. This custom is observed in the whole empire of the king.

From Easter to New Year (from April to October) during the whole of the summer the heat is extreme. From the third hour of the day (nine O'clock in the morning) people shut themselves up in their houses until the evening, at which time everybody goes out. The streets and markets are lighted up and the inhabitants employ all the night upon their business, which they are prevented from doing in the daytime, in consequence of the excessive heat.

24. Quilon, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela²⁴

...The pepper grows in this country; the trees which bear this fruit are planted in the fields, which surround the towns, and every one knows his plantation. The trees are small and the pepper is originally white, but when they collect it, they put it into basins and pour hot water upon it; it is then exposed to the heat of the sun and dried in order to make it hard and more substantial, in the course of which process it becomes of a black colour.

Cinnamon, ginger, and many other kinds of spices also grow in this country.

25. Quilon, Chau Ju-Kua²⁵

Quilon may be reached in five days with the monsoon from Nanp'i. It takes a Ts'uan-chou ship over forty days to reach Lan-li (i.e., Lan-wu-li); there the winter is spent, and the following year, a further voyage of a month will take it to this country...

The native products comprise cocoanuts and sapan-wood; for wine they use a mixture of honey with cocoanuts and the juice of a flower; which they let ferment...

For the purpose of trade they use coins of gold and silver; twelve silver coins are worth one gold one. The country is warm and has no cold season. Every year ships come to this country from San-fo-ts'i, Kien-pi and Ki-t'o [all in Sumatra], and the articles they trade with are the same as in Nan-p'i.

"Great numbers of Ta-shi [Arabs] live in this country.

26. Of the kingdom of Koulam [Quilon], Marco Polo²⁶

Upon leaving Maabar and proceeding five hundred miles towards the south-west, you arrive at the kingdom of Koulam. It is the residence of many Christians and Jews, who retain their proper language. The king is not tributary to any other. Much good sappan-wood grows there, and pepper in great abundance, being found both in the woody and the open parts of the country. It is gathered in the months of May, June, and July; and the vines which produce it are cultivated in plantations. Indigo also, of excellent quality and in large quantities, is made here. They procure it from an herbaceous plant, which is taken up by the roots and put into tubs of water, where it is suffered to remain till it rots; when they press out the juice. This, upon being exposed to the sun, and evaporated, leaves a kind of paste, which is cut into small pieces of the form in which we see it brought to us.

The heat during some months is so violent as to be scarcely supportable; yet the merchants resort thither from various parts of the world, such, for instance, as the kingdom of Manji and Arabia, attracted by the great profits they obtain both upon the merchandise they import, and upon their returning cargoes...

Wine is made from the sugar yielded by a species of palm. It is extremely good, and inebriates faster than the wine made from grapes. The inhabitants possess abundance of everything necessary for the food of man excepting grain, of which there is no other kind than rice; but of this the quantity is very great.

Among them are many astrologers and physicians, well versed in their art. All the people, both male and female, are black, and, with the exception of a small piece of cloth attached to the front of their bodies, they go quite naked. Their manners are extremely sensual, and they take as wives their relations by blood, their mothers-in-law, upon the death of their fathers, and the widows of their deceased brothers. But this, as I have been informed, is the state of morals in every part of India.

27. Quilon, Ibn Battuta²⁷

On the tenth day we reached the city of Kawlam [Quilon], one of the finest towns in the Mulaybar-lands. It has fine bazaars, and its merchants are called Sulis. They are immensely wealthy; a single merchant will buy a vessel with all that is in it and load it with goods from his own house. There is a colony of Muslim merchants; the cathedral mosque is a magnificent building, constructed by the merchant Khwaja Muhazzab. This city is the nearest of the Mulaybar towns to China and it is to it that most of the merchants [from China] come. Muslims are honoured and respected in it. The sultan of Kawlam is an infidel called the Tirawari; he respects the Muslims and has severe laws against thieves and profligates.

28. Tanjore – rice country, Ibn Khurdadhbih²⁸

From there (Mulay) to Bullin [neighbourhood of Tanjore district], it is two days' journey [by sea], and from there to al-Lujjat al-Uzma (the Great Fathomless Sea) it is a journey of two days [by sea]. From Bullin the sea routes bifurcate. Thus, anyone sailing along the coast will take two days from Bullin to Babattan [Coromandel Coast]. This is the country of rice and is the source of provisions for the inhabitants of Sarandib.

29. Mali, Al-Idrisi²⁹

Five miles by sea (from Kulam Mali) lies the island of Mali, which is large and pretty. It is an elevated plateau, but not very hilly, and is covered with vegetation. The pepper vine grows in this island, as in Kandarina and Jirbatan, but it is found nowhere else but in these three places. It is a shrub, having a trunk like that of the vine; the leaf is like the convolvulus, but longer; it bears grapes like those of the Shabuka, each bunch of which is sheltered by a leaf which curls over when the fruit is ripe. White pepper is what is gathered as it begins to ripen, or even before. Ibn Khurdadba states that the leaves curl

over the bunches to protect them from the rain, and that they return to their natural position when the rain is over – a surprising fact!

Kambaya, Subara, Sindan, and Saimur form part of India. The last named belongs to a country whose king is called Balhara: his kingdom is vast, well-peopled, commercial, and fertile. It pays heavy taxes, so that the king is immensely rich. Many aromatics and perfumes are produced in this country.

30. Broach, Al-Idrisi³⁰

Baruh [Bharuch, Broach] is a large handsome town, well-built of bricks and plaster. The inhabitants are rich and engaged in trade, and they freely enter upon speculations and distant expeditions. It is a port for the vessels coming from China, as it is also for those of Sind. From hence to Saimur is considered two days' journey, and to Nahrwara eight days through a flat country where they travel in carriages on wheels. In all Nahrwara and its environs there is no other mode of travelling except in chariots drawn by oxen under the control of a driver. These carriages are fitted with harness and traces, and are used for the carriage of goods.

31. Tanna, Al-Idrisi³¹

Bana [Tanna] is a pretty town upon a great gulf where vessels anchor and from whence they set sail. In the neighbouring mountains the kana and tabashir grow. The roots of the kana which are gathered here are transported to the east and to the west. The tabashir is adulterated by mixing it with ivory cinders, but the real article is extracted from the roots of the reed called *sharki*...

32. The ancient city of Thana, Odoric of Pordenone³²

The city is excellent in position, and hath great store of bread and wine, and aboundeth in trees. This was a great place in days of old, for it was the city of King Porus [it is difficult to say how Porus got associated with these parts; one speculation is that the Elephanta Caves situated nearby were attributed to Alexander by foreigners and Porus thus too was relocated here], who waged so great a battle with King Alexander. The people thereof are idolaters, for they worship fire, and serpents, and trees also. The land is under the dominion of the Saracens, who have taken it by force of arms, and they are now subject to the Empire of Dili.

33. Kandaria, Al-Idrisi³³

From Bana [Tanna] to Fandarina is four days. Fandarina is a town built at the mouth of a river which comes from Manibar [Malabar] where vessels from India and Sind cast anchor. The inhabitants are rich, the markets well supplied, and trade flourishing. North of this town there is a very high mountain

covered with trees, villages, and flocks. The cardamom grows here, and forms the staple of a considerable trade. It grows like the grains of hemp, and the grains are enclosed in pods. From Fandarina to Jirbatan, a populous town on a little river is five days. It is fertile in rice and grain, and supplies provisions to the markets of Sarandib. Pepper grows in the neighbouring mountains. From Jirbatan to Sanji and Kaikasar two days. These are maritime towns near to each other; the neighbourhood produces rice and corn. From hence to Kilkayan one day. From Kilkayan to Lulu and to Kanja one day. The vicinity is fertile in rice and wheat, and produces sapan wood abundantly. The growth of this tree resembles that of the oleander. Cocoa nut trees abound. From Kanja to Samandar thirty miles.

34. Samandar [Sonargoan], Al-Idrisi³⁴

Samandar is a large town, commercial, and rich, where there are good profits to be made. It is a port dependant upon Kanauj, king of this country. It stands upon a river, which comes from the country of Kashmir. Rice and various grains, especially excellent wheat, are to be obtained here. Aloe wood is brought hither from the country of Karmut [Kamrup?] 15 days' distance, by a river of which the waters are sweet. The aloe wood which comes from this country is of a superior quality and of a delicious perfume. It grows in the mountains of Karan.

35. Kanauj, Al-Idrisi³⁵

[Kanauj] is a fine commercial city which gives its name to the king of the country. It is built upon the banks of a large river which falls into the Musala.

36. Kanauj, Ibn Battuta³⁶

Thence we travelled to the river known as *Ab-i Siyah* ['Black Water,' Kalindi] and from there reached the city of Qinawj [Kanauj]. It is a large, well-built and strongly fortified city; prices there are cheap and sugar plentiful, and it is surrounded by a great wall.

37. Kandahar, Al-Idrisi³⁷

Kandahar is a city built in the mountains of which we have just spoken, eight days journey from Moridas, and the road from one place to the other passes over the mountains. It is a considerable town, and well peopled. The inhabitants are remarkable for the manner in which they allow their beards to grow. Their beards are large and very thick, and hang down to their knees. This has given rise to a proverbial saying. They are stout in person, and wear the Turkish costume. The country produces wheat, rice, various grains, sheep, and oxen. They eat sheep, which have died a natural death, but not oxen, as

we have already observed. From Kandahar to Nahrwara is five days' journey in carriages.

The people of Kandahar are often at war with those of Kabul, which is an Indian city, large and well built, bordering upon Tukharistan. The mountains produce excellent aloe wood, and the neighbourhood supplies cocoa nuts and myrobolans, which grow in the hills, and of that sort which is called Kabuli, from this town. In the lowlands saffron is largely cultivated, and is the object of a large export trade. It is a hazardous crop, depending upon the state of the atmosphere. The city of Kandahar is defended by a very strong citadel built upon a scarped rock, and is accessible by one road only. It is inhabited by Musulmans, and there is a quarter in which the infidel Jews dwell. No king can take the title of Shah until he has been inaugurated at Kabul. According to an ancient law, the assumption of power must be made in that city; hence it is resorted to from foreign and very distant countries. In the fertile lands of Kabul a good deal of indigo is cultivated of the very best quality, it has a great repute, and is the object of a great trade. Cotton cloths are also made here, and are exported to China, Khurasan, and Sind. There are some well-known iron mines in the mountains of Kabul. The metal is of a grey colour, and veined – it becomes very sharp.

38. Taifand, Zakariya Al Kazwini³⁸

Taifand – An impregnable fortress upon the summit of a moun-tain in India, to which there is only one way of access. On the top of this mountain there is water, cultivated land, and all necessary food. Yaminu-d daula Mahmud bin Subuktigin in the year 414 A.H. (1023 A.D.) besieged it for a long time, but at length reduced its garrison to extremities. There were 500 elephants on the mountain. The garrison asked quarter, and it was granted, and the fortress was confirmed to its master on payment of tribute. The lord of the fortress presented many gifts to the Sultan, among which was a bird in the form of a dove. When food containing poison was presented to this bird, tears would fall from its eyes, and the tear drops were converted into stone, which stone being broken and placed upon a wound, it would heal up. This bird is found only in this place, and does not thrive elsewhere.

39. Hu-ch'a-la [the earliest reference to Gujarat in a Chinese work], Chau Ju-Kua,³⁹

The kingdom of Hu-ch'a-la rules over a hundred cities and more; its (principal) city has a four-fold wall....

The native products comprise great quantities of indigo, red kino, myrobolans and foreign cotton stuffs of every colour. Every year these goods are transported to the Ta-shi countries for sale.

40. Of the kingdom of Gujarat, Marco Polo⁴⁰

The kingdom of Guzerat, which is bounded on the western side by the Indian Sea, is governed by its own king, and has its peculiar language...

This country affords harbour to pirates of the most desperate character, who, when in their cruises they seize upon a travelling merchant, immediately oblige him to drink a dose of sea-water, which by its operation on his bowels discovers whether he may not have swallowed pearls or jewels, upon the approach of an enemy in order to conceal them...

Cotton is produced in large quantities from a tree that is about six yards in height, and bears during twenty years; but the cotton taken from trees of that age is not adapted for spinning, but only for quilting. Such, on the contrary, as is taken from trees of twelve years old is suitable for muslins and other manufactures of extraordinary fineness. Great numbers of skins of goats, buffaloes, wild oxen, rhinoceroses, and other beasts are dressed here; and vessels are loaded with them, and bound to different parts of Arabia. Coverlets for beds are made of red and blue leather, extremely delicate and soft, and stitched with gold and silver thread; upon these the Mahometans are accustomed to repose. Cushions also, ornamented with gold wire in the form of birds and beasts, are the manufacture of this place; and in some instances their value is so high as six marks of silver. Embroidery is here performed with more delicacy than in any other part of the world.

41. The Country of Gujarat, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁴¹

In it there are a number of cities and towns. *Nahlawara* [Anhilvara, Patan, near Ahmadabad]...It is bigger than Kanbayat and its population is scattered between gardens and water...

Kanbayat [from Khambavati, city of pillars, modern Cambay]...It is a city on the coast of the Indian Ocean...It is a beautiful city bigger than Ma'arra in Sind. Its buildings are of brick and there is also white marble; but there are only a few gardens in it.

Tana: It is a city on the sea side situated in the first of the seven climates...As stated in *Taqwim ul-Buldan*, it belongs to the eastern region of Guzerat. Ibn Said says, "it is a well-known place among the merchants. All the inhabitants of this sea coast", he says, "are infidels who worship idols, and Muslims live with them". Al-Idrisi relates, "its fields and hills produce reed (*qana*) and 'sugar of bamboo' which are exported from there to other countries. Abu Raiban calls it nisba 'Tanishi'; the 'Tanishi cloth' come from there.

Somnath: It is situated in the second climate...Ibn Said says, "it is well-known among the travellers and is also known as the land of Lar. It is situated on a headland which projects into the sea so that many ships bound for Aden

touch it, because it is not in a gulf. It lies on the mouth of a river that comes down from the big mountains lying in the North-east. There was an idol which the Hindus held in great honour and which belonged to this place; it was called the 'Idol of Somnath.'

It was destroyed by Yaminuddaula Mahmud bin Sabuktigin when he conquered it as is mentioned in the historical books.

Sadan...It is a city at three days' distance from Tana, situated in the first of the seven climates...In *Taqwim ul-Buldan* it is said on the authority of some travellers that it is situated on a gulf in the Green Ocean and it is the last region of Guzerat. According to *Al-Qanun* it lies on the sea coast. The author of *Al-Azizi* says "the distance between this place and Mansura is fifteen farsakhs and it is the place where roads converge". He continues, it is the land of costus, male and female bamboos and is one of the biggest ports on the sea...

42. Of the kingdom of Murphili or Monsul, Marco Polo⁴²

The kingdom of Murphili is that which you enter upon leaving the kingdom of Maabar, after proceeding five hundred miles in a northerly direction. Its inhabitants worship idols, and are independent of any other state. They subsist upon rice, flesh, fish, and fruits. In the mountains of this kingdom it is that diamonds are found. During the rainy season the water descends in violent torrents amongst the rocks and caverns, and when these have subsided the people go to search for diamonds in the beds of the rivers, where they find many. Messer Marco was told that in the summer, when the heat is excessive and there is no rain, they ascend the mountains with great fatigue, as well as with considerable danger from the number of snakes with which they are infested. Near the summit, it is said, there are deep valleys, full of caverns and surrounded by precipices, amongst which the dia-monds are found; and here many eagles and white storks, attracted by the snakes on which they feed, are accustomed to make their nests. The persons who are in quest of the diamonds take their stand near the mouths of the caverns, and from thence cast down several pieces of flesh, which the eagles and storks pursue into the valley, and carry off with them to the tops of the rocks. Thither the men immediately ascend, drive the birds away, and recovering the pieces of meat frequently find diamonds sticking to them. Should the eagles have had time to devour the flesh, they watch the place of their roosting at night, and in the morning find the stones amongst the dung and filth that drops from them. But you must not suppose that the good diamonds come among Christians, for they are carried to the grand khan, and to the kings and chiefs of that country. In this country they manufacture the finest cottons that are to be met within any part of India. They have cattle enough, and the largest sheep in the world, and plenty of all kinds of food.

43. Kael, Marco Polo⁴³

Kael is a considerable city, governed by Astiar, one of the four brothers, kings of the country of Maabar, who is rich in gold and jewels, and preserves his country in a state of profound peace. On this account it is a favourite place of resort for foreign merchants, who are well received and treated by the king. Accordingly all the ships coming from the west – as from Ormus, Chisti, Aden, and various parts of Arabia – laden with merchandise and horses, make this port, which is besides well situated for commerce. The prince maintains in the most splendid manner not fewer than three hundred women.

44. Of Malabar, Marco Polo⁴⁴

Malabar is an extensive kingdom of the Greater India, situated towards the west... The people are governed by their own king, who is independent of every other state, and they have their proper language. In this country the north star is seen about two fathoms above the horizon. As well here as in the kingdom of Guzerat... there are numerous pirates, who yearly scour these seas with more than one hundred small vessels, seizing and plundering all the merchant ships that pass that way. They take with them to sea their wives and children of all ages, who continue to accompany them during the whole of the summer's cruise. In order that no ships may escape them, they anchor their vessels at the distance of five miles from each other; twenty ships thereby occupying a space of an hundred miles. Upon a trader's appearing in sight of one of them, a signal is made by fire or by smoke; when they all draw closer together, and capture the vessel as she attempts to pass. No injury is done to the persons of the crew; but as soon as they have made prize of the ship, they turn them on shore, recommending to them to provide themselves with another cargo, which, in case of their passing that way again, may be the means of enriching their captors a second time.

In this kingdom there is vast abundance of pepper, ginger, cubeb, and Indian nuts; and the finest and most beautiful cottons are manufactured that can be found in any part of the world. The ships from Manji bring copper as ballast; and besides this, gold brocades, silks, gauzes, gold and silver bullion, together with many kinds of drugs not produced in Malabar; and these they barter for the commodities of the province. There are merchants on the spot who ship the former for Aden, from whence they are transported to Alexandria.

45. The Province of Manibar [from Sanskritised Malayabar, *bar* indicates that which is both a coast and a kingdom], *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁴⁵

It a region of Hind in the east of the Province of Guzarat which has already been mentioned. The author of *Taqwim ul-Buldan* says Manibar is the country of pepper. The pepper-tree has bunches like the ears of the millet plant

and its tree entwines itself round other trees as the grape-vine does. There are many cities and all the districts of Manibar are green and abound in water and dense trees....

Shaliyat [Mount Delly, Eli in Portuguese sources, on the Malabar coast]: ["I went then to Shalyat, a very pretty town, where they make the stuff that bear its name" (shawl).]

Kaulam [Quilon]: It is situated in the first climate...Ibn Said says, "it is the last of the land of pepper in the East. From that place ships sail to Aden..." There are many gardens and the long-wood grows there: this is a tree like that of pomegranate and its leaves resemble that of vine-grapes. There is a quarter for the Muslims and a Mosque.

46. The Country of Mabar, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁴⁶

Ibn Said says, "it is well known and muslin is exported from there; and its washermen are proverbial. In the North there are mountains adjoining the kingdom of Balhara the king of India. In the South the river Sulyan falls into the Sea. In *Masalik ul-Absar* it is mentioned on the authority of the chief Qazi Sirajuddin al-Hind that the country of Mabar consists of numerous big islands. There are many cities and towns on them."

47. Fabrics at Shaliyat [near Calicut], Ibn Battuta⁴⁷

I went on from there to ash-Shaliyat, a most beautiful town, in which the fabrics called by its name are manufactured.

48. Calicut, Abder Razzak⁴⁸

Calicut is a perfectly secure harbour, which, like that of Ormuz, brings together merchants from every city and from every country; in it are to be found abundance of precious articles brought thither from maritime countries, and especially from Abyssinia, Zirbad, and Zanguebar; from time to time ships arrive there from the shores of the House of God [Mecca] and other parts of the Hedjaz, and abide at will, for a greater or longer space, in this harbour; the town is inhabited by Infidels, and situated on a hostile shore.

It contains a considerable number of Mussulmauns, who are constant residents, and have built two mosques, in which they meet every Friday to offer up prayer. They have one Kadi, a priest, and for the most part they belong to the sect of Schafei.

Security and justice are so firmly established in this city, that the most wealthy merchants bring thither from maritime countries considerable cargoes, which they un-load, and unhesitatingly send into the markets and the bazaars, without thinking in the meantime of any necessity of checking the account or of keeping watch over the goods. The officers of the custom-house take upon

themselves the charge of looking after the merchandise, over which they keep watch day and night. When a sale is effected, they levy a duty on the goods of one-fortieth part; if they are not sold, they make no charge on them whatsoever.

49. Calicut, Athanasius Nikitin⁴⁹

Calecot (Calicut) is a port for the whole Indian sea, which God forbid any craft to cross, and whoever saw it will not go over it healthy. The country produces pepper, ginger, colour plants, muscat, cloves, cinnamon, aromatic roots, *adrach* (?) and every description of spices, and everything is cheap and servants and maids are very good.

50. Horses at Calicut, Wang Ta-Yuan⁵⁰

They have fine horses which come from the extreme West, and which are brought here by the shipload. Each horse will fetch from an hundred to a thousand pieces of gold, even going as high as four thousand, and the foreign people who fetch them thither would think the market a very bad one if they did not.

51. Cochin, Fel Hsin⁵¹

This locality is on a headland facing Hsi-lan (Ceylon). To the interior it confines on Ku-li. The climate is constantly hot, the soil is poor, the crops sparse. The villages are on the sea-shore. The usages and customs are honest...

The natural product is a great abundance of pepper. Wealthy people put up broad godowns in which to store it. In their trading transactions they use a small gold coin called *panan* (*fanam*). The goods used in trading are coloured satins, white silk, blue and white porcelain-ware, gold and silver.

52. Merchants at Cochin, Ma Huan⁵²

All trading transactions are carried on by the Chittis, who buy the pepper from the farmers when it is ripe, and sell it to foreign ships when they pass by. They also buy and collect precious stones and other costly wares. A pearl weighing three-and-a-half candareens can be bought for a hundred ounces of silver. Coral is sold by the catti; inferior pieces of coral are cut into beads and polished by skilled workmen; these are also sold by weight. The coinage of the country is a gold piece, called Fa-nan, weighing one candareen; there is also a little silver coin called a Ta-urh, which is used for making small purchases in the market. Fifteen Ta-urhs make a Fa-nan.

There are no asses or geese in this country, and there is neither wheat nor barley; rice, maize, hemp, and millet abound. Articles of tribute are sent to China by our ships on their return voyage.

53. Coimbatore, Ma Huan⁵³

...the kingdom or city of K-an-pa-mei [Coimbatore] [is] a great seat of cotton manufacture where is made, as also in the surrounding districts, a cloth called Chih-li (Chih-li-pu) cloth. It is made up into pieces, four feet five inches wide and twenty-five feet long; it is sold there for eight or ten gold pieces of their money. They also prepare raw silk for the loom which they dye various shades of colour and then weave into flowered pattern goods made up into pieces four to five feet wide and twelve to thirteen feet long. Each length is sold for one hundred gold pieces of their money.

54. Wonderful harbour at Fattan [Kaveripattam or Negapattam], Ibn Battuta⁵⁴

I left the camp and reached Fattan [Kaveripattam or Negapattam?], which is a large and fine city on the coast, with a wonderful harbour. There is a great wooden pavilion in it, erected on enormous beams and reached by a covered wooden gallery. When an enemy attacks the place they tie all the vessels in port to this pavilion, which is manned by soldiers and archers, so that the enemy has no chance [of capturing them]. In this city there is a fine mosque, built of stone, and it has also large quantities of grapes and excellent pomegranates. I met here the pious shaykh Muhammad of Nishapur, one of the crazy darwishes who let their hair hang loose over their shoulders. He had with him a lion which he had tamed, and which used to eat and sit along with the darwishes. Accompanying him were about thirty darwishes, one of whom had a gazelle. Though the gazelle and the lion used to be together in the same place, the lion did not molest it.

55. The city and seaport of Pelagonda, Nicolo Conti⁵⁵

The very noble city of Pelagonda is subject to the same king; it is ten miles in circumference, and is distant eight days' journey from Bizenegalia. Travelling afterwards hence by land for twenty days he arrived at a city and seaport called Peudifetania, on the road to which he passed two cities, viz., Odeschiria and Cenderghiria, where the red sandal wood grows.

56. Trade at Bedar, Athanasius Nikitin⁵⁶

In Bedar there is a trade in horses, goods, stuffs, silks, and all sorts of other merchandise, and also in black people; but no other article is sold but Indian goods, and every kind of eatables; no goods, however, that will do for Russia. And all are black and wicked, and the women all harlots, or witches, or thieves and cheats; and they destroy their masters with poison.

57. Trade routes, Ibn Khurdadhbih⁵⁷

The Jewish merchants...travel from the West to the East, and from the

East to the West, now by land and now by sea.... they embark on the Eastern sea (Red Sea) and go from Colzom to Hedjaz and Jidda; and then to Sind, India and China. On their return they bring musk, aloes, camphor, cinnamon and other products of the eastern countries....

B. SHIPS AND NAVIGATION

1. Ships 'mighty frail,' John of Monte Corvino⁵⁸

Their ships in these parts are mighty frail and uncouth, with no iron in them, and no caulking. They are sewn like clothes with twine. And so if the twine breaks anywhere there is a breach indeed! Once every year therefore there is a mending of this, more or less, if they propose to go to sea. And they have a frail and flimsy rudder like the top of a table, of cubit in width, in the middle of the stern; and when they have to tack, it is done with a vast deal of trouble; and if it is blowing in any way hard, they cannot tack at all. They have but one sail and one mast, and the sails are either matting or of some miserable cloth. The ropes are of husk.

Moreover their mariners are few and far from good. Hence they run a multitude of risks, insomuch that they are wont to say, when any ship achieves her voyage safely and soundly, that 'tis by God's guidance, and man's skill hath little availed.

2. Ships and navigation, Nicolo Conti⁵⁹

The natives of India steer their vessels for the most part by the stars of the southern hemisphere, as they rarely see those of the north.

They are not acquainted with the use of the compass, but measure their courses and the distances of places by the elevation and depression of the pole. They find out where they are by this mode of measurement. They build some ships much larger than ours, capable, of containing two thousand butts, and with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks, in order to withstand the force of the tempests to which they are much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments, that should one part be shattered, the other portion remaining entire may accomplish the voyage.

3. Chinese ships at Calicut, Ma Huan⁶⁰

When a ship arrives from China, the king's overseer and a Chitti go on board and make an invoice of the goods, and a day is settled for valuing the cargo. On the day appointed the silk goods, more especially the Khinkis (Kincobs), are first inspected and valued, which when decided on, all present join hands, whereupon the broker says, "The price of your goods is now fixed,

and cannot in any way be altered."

The price to be paid for pearls and precious stones is arranged by the Weinaki broker, and the value of the Chinese goods taken in exchange for them is that previously fixed by the broker in the way above stated.

C. PEARL FISHERY

Fishery of pearls at Maabar [the Coromandel coast], Marco Polo⁶¹

Leaving the island of Zeilan, and sailing in a westerly direction sixty miles, you reach the great province of Maabar, which is not an island, but a part of the continent of the Greater India, as it is termed, being the noblest and richest country in the world. It is governed by four kings, of whom the principal is named Senderbandi. Within his dominions is a fishery for pearls, in the gulf of a bay that lies between Maabar and the island of Zeilan, where the water is not more than from ten to twelve fathoms in depth, and in some places not more than two fathoms. The business of the fishery is conducted in the following manner. A number of merchants form themselves into separate companies, and employ many vessels and boats of different sizes, well provided with ground-tackle, by which to ride safely at anchor. They engage and carry with them persons who are skilled in the art of diving for the oysters in which the pearls are enclosed. These they bring up in bags made of netting that are fastened about their bodies, and then repeat the operation, rising to the surface when they can no longer keep their breath, and after a short interval diving again. In this operation they persevere during the whole of the day, and by their exertions accumulate (in the course of the season) a quantity of oysters sufficient to supply the demands of all countries. The greater proportion of the pearls obtained from the fisheries in this gulf, are round, and of a good lustre. The spot where the oysters are taken in the greatest number is called Betala, on the shore of the mainland; and from thence the fishery extends sixty miles to the southward.

In consequence of the gulf being infested with a kind of large fish, which often prove destructive to the divers, the merchants take the precaution of being accompanied by certain enchanters belonging to a class of Brahmans, who, by means of their diabolical art, have the power of constraining and stupefying these fish, so as to prevent them from doing mischief; and as the fishing takes place in the daytime only, they discontinue the effect of the charm in the evening; in order that dishonest persons who might be inclined to take the opportunity of diving at night and stealing the oysters, may be deterred by the apprehension they feel of the unrestrained ravages of these animals. The enchanters are likewise profound adepts in the art of fascinating all kinds of beasts and birds. The fishery commences in the month of April, and lasts till the middle of May. The privilege of engaging

in it is farmed of the king, to whom a tenth part only of the produce is allowed; to the magicians they allow a twentieth part, and consequently they reserve to themselves a considerable profit. By the time the period above-mentioned is completed, the stock of oysters is exhausted; and the vessels are then taken to another place, distant full three hundred miles from this gulf, where they establish themselves in the month of September, and continue till the middle of October. Independently of the tenth of the pearls to which the king is entitled, he requires to have the choice of all such as are large and well-shaped; and as he pays liberally for them, the merchants are not disinclined to carry them to him for that purpose.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

Postal service of two kinds, Ibn Battuta⁶²

In India the postal service is of two kinds. The mounted couriers travel on horses belonging to the sultan with relays every four miles. The service of couriers on foot is organized in the following manner. At every third of a mile there is an inhabited village, outside which there are three pavilions. In these sit men girded up ready to move off, each of whom has a rod a yard and a half long with brass bells at the top. When a courier leaves the town he takes the letter in the fingers of one hand and the rod with the bells in the other, and runs with all his might. The men in the pavilions, on hearing the sound of the bells, prepare to meet him, and when he reaches them one of them takes the letter in his hand and passes on, running with all his might and shaking his rod until he reaches the next station, and so the letter is passed on till it reaches its destination. This post is quicker than the mounted post. It is sometimes used to transport fruits from Khurasan which are highly valued in India; they are put on plates and carried with great speed to the sultan. In the same way they transport the principal criminals; they are each placed on a stretcher and the couriers run carrying the stretcher on their heads. The sultan's drinking water is brought to him by the same means, when he resides at Dawlat Abad, from the river Kank (Ganges), to which the Hindus go on pilgrimage and which is at a distance of forty days' journey from there.

E. ARTISANS

1. Steel manufacturing, Al-Idrisi⁶³

The Indians are very good at making various compounds of mixtures of substances with the help of which they melt the malleable iron; it then turns into Indian iron, and is called after *al-Hind*. There, in *al-Hind*, are workshops

where swords are manufactured, and their craftsmen make excellent ones surpassing those made by other peoples....no iron is comparable to the Indian one in sharpness.

2. Artisans skilled, Shihabuddin al Umari⁶⁴

In it [the land] are artisans such as makers of swords, bows and spears and different kinds of weapons and coat of mail, goldsmiths, embroiderers, saddlers and masters of every craft who make special things for men and women and masters of swords and pen and the common people of whom the number cannot be reckoned.

3. Artisans of Delhi sent to Samarkand, Timur⁶⁵

I ordered that all the artisans and clever mechanics, who were masters of their respective crafts, should be picked out from among the prisoners and set aside, and accordingly some thou-sands of craftsmen were selected to await my command. All these I distributed among the princes and *amirs* who were present, or who were engaged officially in other parts of my dominions. I had determined to build a *masid-i jamī* in Samarkand, the seat of my empire, which should be without rival in any country; so I ordered that all builders and stone-masons should be set apart for my own especial service.

F. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

1. Hindu metrology and measurement, Alberuni⁶⁶

Counting is innate to man. The measure of a thing becomes known by its being compared with another thing which belongs to the same species and is assumed as a unit by general consent. Thereby the difference between the object and this standard becomes known.

By weighing, people determine the amount of gravity of heavy bodies, when the tongue of the scales stands at right angles on the horizontal plane. Hindus want the scales very little, because their *dirhams* are determined by number, not by weight, and their fractions, too, are simply counted as so-and-so many *fulus*. The coinage of both *dirhams* and *fulus* is different according to towns and districts. They weigh gold with the scales only when it is in its natural state or such as has been worked, e.g. for ornaments, but not coined. They use as a weight of gold the *Suvarna* = $1 \frac{1}{2}$ *tola*. They use the *tola* as frequently as we use the *mithkal*. According to what I have been able to learn from them, it corresponds to 3 of our *dirhams*, of which 10 equal 7 *mithkal*.

Therefore 1 *tola* = $2-1/10$ of our *mithkal*.

The greatest fraction of a *tola* is $1/12$ called *masha*.

Therefore 16 *masha* = 1 *suvarna*...

The reader must know that 16 *masha* are 1 *suvarna*, but in weighing wheat or barley they reckon 4 *suvarna* = 1 *pala*, and in weighing water and oil they reckon 8 *survarna* = 1 *pala*.

The Hindu balance

The balances with which the Hindus weigh things are...of which the weights are immovable, whilst the scales move on certain marks and lines.

Therefore the balance is called *tula*. The first lines mean the units of the weight from 1 to 5, and farther on to 10; the following lines mean the tenths, 10, 20, 30, &c...

Dry measurement

By measuring (with dry measures) people determine the body and the bulk of a thing, if it fills up a certain measure which has been gauged as containing a certain quantity of it, it being understood that the way in which the things are laid out in the measure, the way in which their surface is determined, and the way in which, on the whole, they are arranged within the measure, are in every case identical. If two objects which are to be weighed belong to the same species, they then prove to be equal, not only in bulk, but also in weight; but if they do not belong to the same species, their bodily extent is equal, not their weight.

They have a measure called *bisi* (? *sibi*), which is mentioned by every man from Kanauj and Somanath...

From the same source I learnt that a *mana* of wheat is nearly equal to 5 *mana*. Therefore 1 *bisi* (?) is equal to 20 *mana*...

Measurement of distance

Mensuration is the determination of distances by lines and of superficies by planes. A plane ought to be measured by part of a plane, but the mensuration by means of lines effects the same purpose, as lines determine the limits of planes. When, in quoting Varahamihira, we had come so far as to determine the weight of a barley-corn, we made a digression into an exposition of weights, where we used his authority about gravity, and now we shall return to him and consult him about distances. He says:-

8 barley-corns put together	= 1 <i>angula</i> , i.e. finger.
4 fingers	= 1 <i>rama</i> (?), i.e. the fist.
24 fingers	= 1 <i>hattha</i> , i.e. yard, also called <i>dasta</i> .
4 yards	= 1 <i>dhanu</i> , i.e. arc = a fathom.
40 arcs	= 1 <i>nalva</i> .
25 <i>nalva</i>	= 1 <i>krosa</i>

Hence it follows that 1 *kroh* = 4000 yards; and as our mile has just so

many yards, 1 mile = 1 *kroh*. Pulisa the Greek also mentions in his *Siddhanta* that 1 *kroh* = 4000 yards. . .

The *yard* is equal to 2 *mikyas* or 24 fingers; for the Hindus determine the *sanku*, i.e. *mikyas*, by idol-fingers. They do not call the twelfth part of a *mikyas* a *finger* in general, as we do, but their *mikyas* is always a *span*. The *span*, i.e. the distance between the ends of the thumb and the small finger at their widest possible stretching, is called *vitasti* and also *kishku*.

The distance between the ends of the fourth or ring-finger and the thumb, both being stretched out, is called *gokarna*.

The distance between the ends of the index-finger and of the thumb is called *karabha*, and is reckoned as equal to two-thirds of a *span*.

The distance between the tops of the middle finger and of the thumb is called *tala*. The Hindus maintain that the height of a man is eight times his *tala*, whether he be tall or small; as people say with regard to the foot, that it is one-seventh of the height of a man....

Yojana

After the measure of the *krosa* has been fixed and found to be equal to our *mile*, the reader must learn that they have a measure of distances, called *yojana*, which is equal to 8 miles or to 32,000 yards....

Circumference and diameter

The elements of the calculations of the Hindus on the circumference of the circle rest on the assumption that it is *thrice its diameter*. So the *Matsya-Purana* says, after it has mentioned the diameters of the sun and moon in *yojanas*: "The circumference is thrice the diameter."...

The same occurs also in the *Vayu-Purana*. In later times, however, Hindus have become aware of the fraction following after the three wholes. According to Brahmagupta, the circumference is $3\frac{1}{7}$ times the diameter; but he finds this number by a method peculiar to himself...

2. Measures and weights, *Subh-ul-Asha*⁶⁷

There appears to have been no uniformity in the standards of weights and measures in India which differed according to the locality as well as the article to be weighed or measured. The coins used at the time were also measures of weight. That accounts for the pains taken by the state to maintain the purity and the weight of the coins....

According to the author of *Masalik ul-Absar* the *mann* of Delhi was equal to 70 *mithqals*. Taking a *mithqal* to be equal to 72 grains, a *sir* would weigh 29 *tolas* and 2 *mashas* or 5040 grains, a *maund* would be equal to $13\frac{1}{2}$ modern

seers or 28.8 lbs avoirdupois....

As regards gold, they weigh it by *mithqal*. Every three *mithqals* are called '*Tanga*'. The gold *Tanga* is known as '*Red Tanga*' and the Silver *Tanga* is known as '*White Tanga*'. Every 100,000 *Tangas* whether of gold or of silver are called Lukk (*lakh*).

However, the gold lukk is called '*Red Luk*' and silver lukk is called '*White Lukk*'.

The *ratl* is known among them as '*sir*', the weight of which is seventy mithqals i.e. $102\frac{2}{3}$ Egyptian Dirhams. Every forty '*sir*' are equal to one '*mann*'. They sell all things by weight. Measurement (*kail*) is unknown to them.

G. COINAGE AND CURRENCY

1. Coinage in Mansura, Ibn Haukal⁶⁸

The current coin of the country is stamped at Kandahar; one of the pieces is equivalent to five dirhams. The Tatari coin also is current, each being in weight equal to a dirham and a third. They likewise use dinars.

2. Coinage of Malabar, Chau Ju-Kua⁶⁹

They cut an alloyed silver into coins; on these they stamp an official seal. The people use these in trading.

3. Coins, measures, and weights, Shihabuddin al Umari⁷⁰

Sheikh Mubarak related to me: the '*red tanka*' is equal to three *mithqals* and the white *tanka*, namely the silver *tanga* has eight *hashtgani-dirhams*. This *hashtgani-dirham* has the weight of the silver Dirham which is current in Egypt and Syria. Its value is the same as that and there is hardly a difference between them. This *hashtgani Dirham* has four *Sultani-dirhams* and it is called *dogani*. This *Sultani-dirham* comes to one-third of the *shashtgani-dirhams* and this is a kind of money which is used in India. Its value is three-quarter of the *hashtgani-dirham*. The half of this *Sultani-dirham* is called *yegani* and is one *jital*. Another dirham is called *dawazdeh-gani* the value of which is one and a half *hashtgani-dirhams*. Another dirham is called *shanzdehgani* the value of which corresponds to two dirhams. In these days the dirhams of India are six: *Shanzdehgani*, *dawazdehgani*, *hashtgani*, *shashtgani*, *sultani* and *yagani*. The smallest of them is the *Sultani-dirham*. All these three dirhams are current and the commercial transactions amongst them (Indians) are performed with them, but mostly with the *sultani-dirham* which corresponds to a fourth of the Egyptian and Syrian dirham. This *sultani-dirham* consists of eight *fulus* or

two jitals every jital being four fulus so that the hashtgani-dirham which corresponds to the quarter of a silver dirham current in Egypt and Syria, has 32 fulus. Their ritl is called 'seer' and it weighs seventy mithqals, which are equal to 102 2/5 Egyptian dirhams. Every forty seer make one maund. They do not know the use of a measure.

4. About coins, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁷¹

Until recent years the two most widely used coins in Muslim countries were the '*dinar*' and the '*dirham*'. The same coins appear to have been introduced in the newly conquered countries by the Muslims. These coins in India were succeeded by the '*tanga*' and the '*jital*' till the latter gave place to the '*rupee*' and the '*peisa*' ...

5. Various kinds of money, *Nicolo Conti*⁷²

Some regions have no money, but use instead stones which we call cats' eyes. In other parts their money consists of pieces of iron, worked into the form of large needles. In others the medium of exchange consists of cards inscribed with the name of the king. In some parts again of anterior India, Venetian ducats are in circulation. Some have golden coins, weighing more than the double of our florin, and also less, and, moreover silver and brass money. In some places pieces of gold worked to a certain weight are used as money.

6. Currency at Vijayanagar, *Abder Razzak*⁷³

In this country they have three kinds of money, made of gold mixed with alloy: one called *varahah* weighs about one *mithkal*, equivalent to two dinars, *kopeki*; the second, which is called *pertab*, is the half of the first; the third, called *fanom*, is equivalent in value to the tenth part of the last-mentioned coin. of these different coins the *fanom* is the most useful. They cast in pure silver a coin which is the sixth of the *fanom*, which they call *tar*. This latter is also a very useful coin in currency. A copper coin worth the third of a *tar*, is called *djitel*. According to the practice adopted in this empire, all the provinces, at a fixed period, bring their gold to the mint. If any man receive from the divan an allowance in gold he has to be paid by the *darab-khaneh*. The soldiers receive their pay every four months, and no payment is ever made by a draft upon the revenues of any province.

7. Money at Calicut, *Ma Huan*⁷⁴

As in Cochin, the money in circulation is the *Fa-nan* and the *Ta-urh*. Their weights are the *P'o-ho* and the *Fan-la-shih* and there is a measure called a *Tang-ko-li*.

The king's present to the Emperor is usually a gold-plaited girdle set with all kinds of precious stones and pearls.

H. PRICES AND MARKETS

1. Prices of eatables, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁷⁵

It is related on the authority of Sheikh Mubarak ul-Anbati, who lived before 730 (A.H.) that the average rates at that time were $1\frac{1}{2}$ (one and a half) Hasht-gani Dirhams for one *mann* of wheat and one Hasht-gani for one *mann* of barley and $1\frac{3}{4}$ Hasth-gani for one *mann* of rice except the famous kinds which were dearer than this. Peas were two *mann* for one Hasht-gani. Four Astar of beef and mutton for one Sultani-Dirham. Two Hasht gani for a pair of ducks. Four pairs of hen for one Hasht-gani. Five sirs of sugar for one Hasht-gani. A nice fat goat for one tanga (*i.e.* eight Hasht-gani Dirhams) and a nice cow for two tangas (*i.e.* sixteen Hasht-gani Dirham) and sometimes even less, and similar was the price of a buffalo.

Pigeons, sparrows and other kinds of birds were very cheap. The kinds of animals and birds for game are many. What they mostly eat is the flesh of cow and goat though they have many sheep. Because they have become accustomed to it.

It has been reported in *Masalik ul-Absar* on the authority of Khujandi who says, "I and my three friends ate beef, bread and melted-butter for one jital in some places of Delhi till we were satisfied." A jital is equal to four pice (*fulus*) as has been mentioned above.

2. Abundance of food, *Shihabuddin al Umari*⁷⁶

As regards butter and milk of different kinds, they are so abundant that they mean nothing and no value is attached to them. In the bazars different kinds of foods are sold, for instance, roast meat, rice, baked and fried things, sweets of sixty-five kinds, fruit-drinks and sherbets which are hardly to be found in any other city.

3. Prices of girl slaves, *Shihabuddin al Umari*⁷⁷

Ibn al-Taj al-Hafiz al-Multani said to me: I asked how a slave girl could reach this price in spite of the cheapness (in the country). Each one of them informed me severally in interviews that the difference was caused by the grace of her deportment or the refinement of her manners and that a great number of these slave girls knew the Quran by heart, they could write, recite verses and stories, excelled in music, played the lute and chess and

backgammon (nard) and so on. The slave girls take pride in things like these. One of them says: I shall capture the heart of my master within three days; the other says: I shall captivate his heart in one day, a third says: I shall captivate his heart in an hour, another says I shall captivate his heart in the twinkling of an eye. They say that the pretty Indian girls are superior as regards beauty to those of the Turks and Qipchaks besides their good breeding manifold accomplishments and attainments which give them distinction. Most of them are of golden colour some of them are of brilliant whiteness mixed with red. In spite of the great number of Turks and Qipchaks and Byzantines and other nationalities that are there everyone gives preference to none but the Indian pretty girls on account of their perfect beauty and sweetness and other things which words cannot describe.

4. Rates of girl slaves, *Subh-ul-A'sha*⁷⁸

The author of *Masalik ul-Absar* has mentioned the rates of India in his time quoting from *Qadi 'I-Qudat Sirajuddin al Hindi* and others. He relates that a maid-servant's price in Delhi does not exceed eight tangas, and those who are fit for service as well as for conjugal purposes cost fifteen tangas. Outside Delhi they are still cheaper. Qadi Sirajuddin narrated that he once bought a coquettish slave nearing puberty for four Dirhams. He continues, "In spite of this cheapness there are Indian maid-servants whose price amounts to twenty thousand tangas or more on account of their beauty and grace".

5. Horse fair, Athanasius Nikitin⁷⁹

There is a place *Shikbaludin Peratyr*, a bazaar Aladinand, and a fair once a year, where people from all parts of India assemble and trade for ten days. As many as 20,000 horses are brought there for sale from Bedar, which is 20 *kors* distant, and besides every description of goods; and that fair is the best throughout the land of Hindostan. Every thing is sold or bought in memory of Shikbaladin, whose fete falls on the Russian festival of the Protection of the Holy Virgin (1st October). □

Chapter 5

Architecture

- A. Cities, Town Planning
- B. Forts
- C. Temples

A. CITIES, TOWN PLANNING

CHOLA KINGDOM

1. City walls in the Chola Dominion [Coromandel Coast], Chau Ju-Kua¹

In this kingdom there is a city with a seven-fold wall, seven feet high and extending twelve *li* from north to south and seven *li* from east to west. The different walls are one hundred paces distant from each other. Four of these walls are of brick, two of mud, and the one in the centre of wood. There are flowers, fruit trees, and other trees planted (on them?).

The first and second walls enclose the dwellings of the people, – they are surrounded by small ditches; the third and fourth walls (surround) the dwellings of the court officers; within the fifth dwell the king's four sons; within the sixth are the Buddhist (i.e., idol) monasteries where the priests dwell; the seventh wall encloses over four hundred buildings forming the royal palace.

2. Capital of Tchu-Lien [Chola country], Ma Twan-lin²

The capital of *Tchu-lien* has seven enclosing walls, with a height of seven *tchi*, and a hundred paces apart from one another. The outermost enclosure has a diameter of twelve *li* from south to north, and seven *li* from east to west. The first four walls are built of brick; the two following are of mud, and that of the interior is of wood. All are covered with espaliers, or decorated with flowers. The first three enclosures are occupied by the people and include numerous water courses. The fourth enclosure contains the houses of four great officers. The fifth enclosure belongs to the sons of the king. In the sixth is a

temple of Buddha, served by hundred Buddhist priests. Finally the seventh contains the palace of the king, or royal town, comprising more than four hundred buildings. The towns of the second order are thirty-one in number, twelve to the west of the royal residence, eight to the south, and eleven to the north. The reigning dynasty has occupied the throne for three generations [this indicates that part of this notice was written in the time of Rajaraja I].

DELHI

3. Delhi a magnificent city, Ibn Battuta³

On the next day we arrived at the city of Dihli [Delhi], the metropolis of India, a vast and magnificent city, uniting beauty with strength. It is surrounded by a wall that has no equal in the world, and is the largest city in India, nay rather the largest city in the entire Muslim Orient.

The city of Delhi is made up now of four neighbouring and contiguous towns. One of them is Delhi proper, the old city built by the infidels and captured in the year 1188. The second is called Siri, known also as the Abode of the Caliphate; this was the town given by the sultan to Ghiyath ad-Din, the grandson of the Abbasid Caliph Mustansir, when he came to his court. The third is called Tughlaq Abad, after its founder, the Sultan Tughlaq, the father of the sultan of India to whose court we came. The reason why he built it was that one day he said to a former sultan "O master of the world, it were fitting that a city should be built here." The sultan replied to him in jest "When you are sultan, build it." It came about by the decree of God that he became sultan, so he built it and called it by his own name. The fourth is called Jahan Panah, and is set apart for the residence of the reigning sultan, Muhammad Shah. He was the founder of it, and it was his intention to unite these four towns within a single wall, but after building part of it he gave up the rest because of the expense required for its construction.

Mosque

The cathedral mosque occupies a large area; its walls, roof, and paving are all constructed of white stones, admirably squared and firmly cemented with lead. There is no wood in it at all. It has thirteen domes of stone, its pulpit also is made of stone, and it has four courts.

Iron Pillar

In the centre of the mosque is an awe-inspiring column [the Iron Pillar], and nobody knows of what metal it is constructed. One of their learned men told me that it is called *Haft Jush*, which means 'seven metals,' and that it is constructed from these seven. A part of this column, of a finger's breadth, has

been polished, and gives out a brilliant gleam. Iron makes no impression on it. It is thirty cubits high [the figure is exaggerated], and we rolled a turban round it, and the portion which encircled it measured eight cubits. At the eastern gate there are two enormous idols of brass prostrate on the ground and held by stones, and everyone entering or leaving the mosque treads on them. The site was formerly occupied by an idol temple, and was converted into a mosque on the conquest of the city.

Qutb Minar

In the northern court is the minaret [Qutb Minar], which has no parallel in the lands of Islam. It is built of red stone, unlike the rest of the edifice, ornamented with sculptures, and of great height. The ball on the top is of glistening white marble and its ‘apples’ [small balls surmounting a minaret] are of pure gold. The passage is so wide that elephants could go up by it. A person in whom I have confidence told me that when it was built he saw an elephant climbing with stones to the top. The Sultan Qutb ad-Din [actually Alauddin Khalji], wished to build one in the western court even larger, but was cut off by death when only a third of it had been completed. This minaret is one of the wonders of the world for size, and the width of its passage is such that three elephants could mount it abreast. The third of it built equals in height the whole of the other minaret we have mentioned in the northern court, though to one looking at it from below it does not seem so high because of its bulk.

Reservoir

Outside Delhi is a large reservoir named after the Sultan Lalmish, from which the inhabitants draw their drinking water. It is supplied by rain water, and is about two miles in length by half that breadth. In the centre there is a great pavilion built of squared stones, two stories high. When the reservoir is filled with water it can be reached only in boats, but when the water is low the people go into it. Inside it is a mosque, and at most times it is occupied by mendicants devoted to the service of God. When the water dries up at the sides of this reservoir, they sow sugar canes, cucumbers, green melons and pumpkins there. The melons and pumpkins are very sweet but of small size. Between Delhi and the Abode of the Caliphate is the private reservoir, which is larger than the other. Along its sides there are about forty pavilions, and round about it live the musicians.

4. Aibak built Jama Masjid from temple materials, Hasan Nizami⁴

Kutbn-d din built the Jami Masjid at Delhi, and “adorned it with the stones and gold obtained from the temples which had been demolished by

elephants," and covered it with "inscriptions in Toghra, containing the divine commands."

5. The Hauz-I Khas, Timur⁵

This is a reservoir, which was constructed by Sultan Firoz Shah, and is faced all round with stone and cement (*gach*). Each side of that reservoir is more than a bow-shot long, and there are buildings placed around it. This tank is filled by the rains in the rainy season, and it supplies the people of the city with water throughout the year. The tomb of Sultan Firoz Shah stands on its bank.

6. Tour of city, Timur⁶

When my mind was no longer occupied with the destruction of the people of Dehli, I took a ride round the cities. Siri is a round city (*shahr*). Its buildings are lofty. They are surrounded by fortifications (*kala'h*), built of stone and brick, and they are very strong. Old Dehli also has a similar strong fort, but it is larger than that of Siri. From the fort of Siri to that of Old Dehli, which is a considerable distance, there runs a strong wall, built of stone and cement. The part called Jahan-panah is situated in the midst of the inhabited city (*shahr-i abadan*). The fortifications of the three cities have thirty gates. Jahan-panah has thirteen gates, seven on the south side bearing towards the east, and six on the north side bearing towards the west. Siri has seven gates, four towards the outside and three on the inside towards Jahan-panah. The fortifications of old Dehli have ten gates, some opening to the exterior and some towards the interior of the city. When I was tired of examining the city I went into the *Masjid-i jami*, where a congregation was assembled of *saiyids*, lawyers, *shaikhs*, and other of the principal Musulmans, with the inhabitants of their parts of the city, to whom they had been a protection and defence. I called them to my presence, consoled them, treated them with every respect, and bestowed upon them many presents and honours. I appointed an officer to protect their quarter of the city, and guard them against annoyance. Then I remounted and returned to my quarters.

7. Delhi composed of many cities, Shihabuddin al Umari⁷

I enquired from Shaikh Mubarak about the city of Delhi and its condition and the management of the affairs of the Sultans. He related to me that Delhi is composed of many cities which have been united together. Every one of them had a special name and Delhi was only one of them. It is extensive in length and breadth and encloses an area of forty miles. Its buildings are of stone and brick, the roofs of wood and the floor is paved with white stone resembling marble. In it the houses are not built more than two stories high, and in some of them there is a single storey. Nobody paves the floor with

marble except the Sultan.

Sheikh Abu Bakr bin al-Khallal says: this refers to the old houses of Delhi. As regards those which I describe, they are not like this. He says all cities to which at present the name Delhi is applied are twenty-one. On three sides are gardens in straight lines, each line twelve miles long. As regards the western side it is destitute of them on account of the proximity of the hills. In Delhi there are one thousand *madrasas* out of which only one belongs to the *Shafites* and the rest to *Hanafites*. There are about seventy hospitals (*bimaristan*) which are called *Dar-ush-Shifa*. In Delhi and its surroundings are Khanqahs and hospices numbering two thousand, big monasteries and extensive bazars and numerous baths. The water is supplied from wells dug near the watering places not deeper than seven forearms on which are hydraulic wheels. They drink rainwater which is collected in big reservoirs, the diameter of each of which is the distance of an arrowshot or more.

In Delhi is the *mosque* [at Qutb] famous for its *minaret* [the Qutb Minar] the like of which is not as he says, on the surface of the world on account of its height and elevation. Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Khallal-al-Bizi as Suli says that its height is *six hundred cubits* in the air. Sheikh Mubarak says: As regards the palaces of the Sultan and his mansions in Delhi, they are exclusively for his dwelling and the dwelling of his wives, his concubines and his eunuchs and apartments for servants and slaves (mamelukes). None of the Amirs and Khans live with him; and none of them stays there except when he is present on duty; then everyone of them goes back to his own house. They are on duty twice every day in the morning and afternoon.

VIJAYANAGAR

8. City of Vijayanagar unequalled in the world, Abder Razzak⁸

The city of Bidjanagar is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world. It is built in such a manner that seven citadels and the same number of walls enclose each other. Around the first citadel are stones of the height of a man, one half of which is sunk in the ground while the other rises above it. These are fixed one beside the other, in such a manner that no horse or foot soldier could boldly or with ease approach the citadel. If any one would wish to find what point of resemblance this fortress and rampart present with that which exists in the city of Heart, let him picture to himself that the first citadel corresponds with that which extends from the mountain of Mokhtar and Direh dou Buraderim (the Valley of the Two Brothers) as far as the banks of the river and the bridge of Malan, situated east of the town of Ghinan, and west of the village of Saiban.

It is a fortress of a round shape, built on the summit of a mountain, and constructed of stones and lime. It has very solid gates, the guards of which are constantly at their posts, and examine everything with a severe inspection.

The second fortress represents the space which extends from the bridge of the new river, to the bridge of the Karav, lying to the east of the bridge of Renghineh and Djakan, and to the west of the garden of Zibendeh and of the village of Hasan.

The third citadel comprises as much space as lies between the mausoleum of the Imaum Fakhr-eddin-Razi and the dome-shaped monument of Mohammed-Sultan-Schah.

The fourth corresponds to the space which separates the bridge Andjil from the bridge of Kared.

The fifth comprises a space equal to that which extends from the garden of Zagan to the bridge of Andjegan.

The sixth is equivalent to the space contained between the King's gate and the gate of Firouz-abad.

The seventh fortress, which is placed in the centre of the others, occupies an area ten times larger than the marketplace of the city of Herat. It is the palace which is used as the residence of the king. The distance from the gate of the first fortress, which lies on the north, to the first gate, which is situated in the south, is calculated to be two para-sangs. It is the same distance from the east to the west. The space which separates the first fortress from the second, and up to the third fortress, is filled with cultivated fields, and with houses and gardens. In the space from the third to the seventh one meets a numberless crowd of people, many shops, and a bazaar. At the gate of the king's palace are four bazaars, placed opposite each other: On the north is the portico of the palace of the *rai*. Above each bazaar is a lofty arcade with a magnificent gallery, but the audience hall of the king's palace is elevated above all the rest. The bazaars are extremely long and broad. The rose merchants place before their shops high *estrades*, on each side of which they expose their flowers for sale. In this place one sees a constant succession of sweet smelling and fresh looking roses. These people could not live without roses, and they look upon them as quite as necessary as food.

9. Shops contiguous at Vijayanagar, Abder Razzak⁹

Each class of men belonging to each profession has shops contiguous the one to the other; the jewellers sell publicly in the bazaar pearls, rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. In this agreeable locality, as well as in the king's palace, one sees numerous running streams and canals formed of chiselled stone, polished and smooth. On the left of the Sultan's portico rises the divan-

khaneh (the council-house), which is extremely large and looks like a palace. In front of it is a hall, the height of which is above the stature of a man, its length thirty ghez, and its breadth ten. In it is placed the defter-khaneh (the archives), and here sit the scribes...

B. FORTS

1. Gwalior Fort, Ibn Battuta¹⁰

We journeyed thereafter to Galyur or Guyalyur [Gwalior], a large town with an impregnable fortress isolated on the summit of a lofty hill. Over its gate is an elephant with its mahout carved in stone.

2. Deogiri Fort, Ibn Battuta¹¹

The fortress of Duwaygir [Deogiri] mentioned above is a rock situated in a plain; the rock has been excavated and a castle built on its summit. It is reached by a ladder made of leather, which is taken up at night. In its dungeons are imprisoned those convicted of serious crime, and in these dungeons there are huge rats, bigger than cats – in fact, cats run away from them and cannot defend themselves against them, so they can be captured only by employing ruses. I saw them there and marvelled at them.

C. TEMPLES

1. Khajuraho, Ibn Battuta¹²

We went from Parwan [Narwar] to Kajarra [Khajuraho], where there is a large tank about a mile long having on its banks temples with idols, which have been made examples of [i.e. mutilated] by the Muslims.

2. Temple near Mangalore of unequalled beauty, Abder Razzak¹³

The humble author of this narrative having received his audience of dismissal, departed from Calicut by sea. After having passed the port of Bendinaneh [Cananore?], situated on the coast of Melibar, reached the port of Mangalor, which forms the frontier of the kingdom of Bidjanagar [Vijayanagar]. After staying there two or three days he continued his route by land. At a distance of three parasangs from Mangalor he saw a temple of idols, which has not its equal in the universe. It is an equilateral square, of about ten ghez [cubits] in length, ten in breadth, and five in height. It is entirely formed of cast bronze. It has four *estrades*. Upon that in the front stands a human figure, of great size, made of gold; its eyes are formed of two rubies, placed

so artistically that the statue seems to look at you. The whole is worked with wonderful delicacy and perfection.

3. Temple at Belur "offered to the world an idea of paradise," Abder Razzak¹⁴

After passing this temple, I came each day to some city or populous town. At length I came to a mountain whose summit reached the skies, and the foot of which was covered with so great a quantity of trees and thorny underwood, that the rays of the sun could never penetrate the obscurity; nor could the beneficial rains at any time reach the soil to moisten it. Having left this mountain and this forest behind me, I reached a town called Belour, the houses of which were like palaces, and its women reminded one of the beauty of the Houris. In it there is a temple of idols, so lofty as to be visible at a distance of many parasangs. It would be impossible to describe such a building without being suspected of exaggeration. I can only give a general idea of it. In the middle of the town is an open space, of about ten ghez in extent, and which, if one may use a comparison, rivals the garden of Irem. The roses of all kinds are as numerous as the leaves of the trees, on the borders of the streams rise a great number of cypresses, whose towering height is reflected in the waters, plantain trees shoot out their tufted branches, and it would seem as if heaven itself looks down upon this beautiful spot with pleasure and admiration. All the ground of this parterre, all the environs of this place of delight, are paved with polished stones, joined together with so much delicacy and skill, that they seem to form but one single slab of stone, and look like a fragment of the sky which might be supposed to have been brought down to the earth. In the middle of this platform rises a building composed of a cupola formed of blue stones, and terminating in a point. The stone presents three rows of figures.

What can I say of this cupola, which, as regards the delicacy of the work, offered to the world an idea of paradise?

Its vault, rounded and lofty, resembled a new moon; its elevation vied with that of the heavens.

So great a number of pictures and figures had been drawn by the pen and the pencil, that it would be impossible, in the space of a month, to sketch it all upon damask or taffeta. From the bottom of the building to the top there is not a hand's breadth to be found uncovered with paintings, after the manner of the Franks and the people of Khata [China]. The temple consists of a structure of four estrades; this structure is thirty ghez in length, twenty in breadth, fifty in height.

Since that its head shot up towards the skies, that vault, previously without stones in it, now seems formed of them.

Since that its stones have rubbed themselves against the sun, the gold of that orb has taken a purer alloy.

All the other buildings, great and small, are covered with paintings and sculptures of extreme delicacy. In this temple morning and evening, after devotional exercises, which have nothing in them which can be agreeable to God, they play on musical instruments, perform concerts, and give feasts. All the inhabitants of the town have rents and pensions assigned to them on this temple. The most distant cities send hither their alms. In the opinion of these men without religion, this place is the Kabah of the Guebres. □

Chapter 6

Religious Practices

- A. Some observations on religion and philosophy
- B. Image worship
- C. Some important temples
- D. Popular pilgrimage sites
- E. Certain other customs
- F. Cow worship
- G. Ascetics
- H. On Buddhism
- I. Selection of Lama

A. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

1. Religion of China derived from India, the merchant Sulaiman¹

The principles of the religion of China were derived from India. The Chinese say that the Indians brought buddhas into the country, and that they have been the real masters in matters of religion. In both countries they believe in the metempsychosis, but there are some differences upon matters of detail.

2. Very little dispute on theological matters, Alberuni²

On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the most, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy. On the contrary, all that fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them – against all foreigners. They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire

and the water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two elements. Besides, they never desire that a thing which once has been polluted should be purified and thus recovered, as, under ordinary circumstances, if any body or anything has become unclean, he or it would strive to regain the state of purity. They are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion.

3. Aversion of Buddhists, Alberuni³

Another circumstance which increased the already existing antagonism between Hindus and foreigners is that the so-called Shamaniyya (Buddhists), though they cordially hate the Brahmans, still are nearer akin to them than to others. In former times, Khurasan, Persis, Irak, Mosul, the country up to the frontier of Syria, was Buddhistic, but then Zarathustra went forth from Adharbaijan and preached Magism in Balkh (Baktra). His doctrine came into favour with King Gushtasp, and his son Isfendiyad spread the new faith both in east and west, both by force and by treaties. He founded fire-temples through his whole empire, from the frontiers of China to those of the Greek empire.

The succeeding kings made their religion (*i.e.* Zoroastrianism) the obligatory state-religion for Persis and Irak. In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from those countries, and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh. There are some Magians up to the present time in India, where they are called *Maya*. From that time dates their aversion towards the countries of Khurasan. But then came Islam; the Persian empire perished, and the repugnance of the Hindus against foreigners increased more and more when the Muslims began to make their inroads into their country; for Muhammad Ibn Elkasim Ibn Elmunabbih entered Sindh from the side of Sijistan (Sakastene) and conquered the cities of Bahmanwa and Mulasthana, the former of which he called *Al-mansura*, the latter *Al-mamura*. He entered India proper, and penetrated even as far as Kanauj, marched through the country of Gandhara, and on his way back, through the confines of Kashmir, sometimes fighting sword in hand, sometimes gaining his ends by treaties, leaving to the people their ancient belief, except in the case of those who wanted to become Muslims. All these events planted a deeply rooted hatred in their hearts...

4. Hindu views on God, Alberuni⁴

The Hindus believe with regard to God that he is one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free-will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who in his sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that he does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble him. In order to illustrate this we shall produce some extracts from their literature, lest the reader should think that our account is nothing but hearsay.

In the book of Patanjali the pupil asks:

"Who is the worshipped one, by the worship of whom blessing is obtained?"

The master says:

"It is he who, being eternal and unique, does not for his part stand in need of any human action for which he might give as a recompense either a blissful repose, which is hoped and longed for, or a troubled existence, which is feared and dreaded. He is unattainable to thought, being sublime beyond all unlikeness which is abhorrent and all likeness which is sympathetic. He by his essence knows from all eternity. Knowledge, in the human sense of the term, has as its object that which was unknown before, whilst not knowing does not at any time or in any condition apply to God."...

In this way the Hindus express themselves in this very famous book...

5. Hindu views on creation, Alberuni⁵

Regarding the whole creation (*ro ov*), they think that it is a unity, as has already been declared, because Vasudeva speaks in the book called *Gita*: "To speak accurately, we must say that all things are divine; for Vishnu made himself the earth that those living beings should rest thereupon; he made himself water to nourish them thereby; he made himself fire and wind in order to make them grow; and he made himself the heart of every single being. He presented them with recollection and knowledge and the two opposite qualities, as is mentioned in the *Veda*."

Similarity with the book of Apollonius

How much does this resemble the expression of the author of the book of Apollonius, *De Causis Rerum*, as if the one had been taken from the other! He says: "There is in all men a divine power, by which all things, both material and immaterial, are apprehended." Thus in Persian the immaterial Lord is called *Khudha*, and in a derivative sense the word is also used to mean a man, i.e. a human lord.

Purusha

I. Those Hindus who prefer clear and accurate definitions to vague allusions call the soul *purusha*, which means *man*, because it is the living element in the existing world. Life is the only attribute which they give to it. They describe it as alternately knowing and not knowing, as not knowing...(actually), and as knowing...(potentially), gaining knowledge by acquisition. The not-knowing of *purusha* is the cause why action comes into existence, and its knowing is the cause why action ceases.

Avyakta

II. Next follows the general matter, *i.e.* the abstract...which they call *avyakta*, *i.e.* a shapeless thing. It is dead, but has three powers potentially, not actually, which are called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. I have heard that Buddhodana (*sic*), in speaking to his adherents the Shamanians, calls them *buddha*, *dharma*, *sangha*, as it were *intelligence*, *religion*, and *ignorance* (*sic*). The first power is rest and goodness, and hence come existing and growing. The second is exertion and fatigue, and hence come firmness and duration. The third is languor and irresolution, and hence come ruin and perishing. Therefore the first power is attributed to the angels, the second to men, the third to the animals. The ideas *before*, *afterwards*, and *thereupon* may be predicated of all these things only in the sense of a certain sequence and on account of the inadequacy of language, but not so as to indicate any ordinary notions of time.

Vyakta and prakriti

III. Matter proceeding from...into...under the various shapes and with the *three primary forces* is called *vyakta*, *i.e.* having shape, whilst the union of the *abstract*...and of the *shaped matter* is called *prakriti*. This term, however, is of no use to us; we do not want to speak of an *abstract* matter, the term *matter* alone being sufficient for us, since the one does not exist without the other.

Ahankara

IV. Next comes *nature*, which they call *ahankara*. The word is derived from the ideas of *overpowering*, *developing*, and *self-assertion*, because matter when assuming shape causes things to develop into new forms, and this growing consists in the changing of a foreign element and assimilating it to the growing one. Hence it is as if *Nature* were trying to overpower those *other* or foreign elements in this process of changing them, and were subduing that which is changed.

Mahabhuta

V-IX. As a matter of course, each compound presupposes simple elements from which it is compounded and into which it is resolved again. The universal existences in the world are the five elements, *i.e.* according to the Hindus: heaven, wind, fire, water, and earth. They are called *mahabhuta*, *i.e.* having *great natures*. They do not think, as other people do, that the fire is a hot dry body near the bottom of the ether. They understand by fire the common fire on earth which comes from an inflammation of smoke. The *Vayu Purana* says: "In the beginning were earth, water, wind, and heaven. Brahman, on seeing

sparks under the earth, brought them forward and divided them into three parts: the first, *parthiva*, is the common fire, which requires wood and is extinguished by water; the second is *divya*, i.e. the sun; the third, *vidyut*, i.e. the lightning. The sun attracts the water; the lightning shines through the water. In the animals, also, there is fire in the midst of moist substances, which serve to nourish the fire and do not extinguish it."

Panca mataras

X. XIV. As these elements are compound, they presuppose simple ones which are called *panca mataras*, i.e. five mothers. They describe them as the functions of the senses. The simple element of heaven is *sabda*, i.e. that which is heard; that of the wind is *sparsa*, i.e. that which is touched; that of the fire is *rupa*, i.e. that which is seen; that of the water is *rasa*, i.e. that which is tasted; and that of the earth is *gandha*, i.e. that which is smelled. With each of these *mahabhuta* elements (earth, water, &c.) they connect, firstly, one of the *panca-mataras* elements, as we have here shown; and, secondly, all those which have been attributed to the *mahabhuta* elements previously mentioned. So the earth has all five qualities; the water has them *minus* the smelling (= four qualities); the fire has them *minus* the smelling and tasting (i.e. three qualities); the wind has them *minus* smelling, tasting, and seeing (i.e. two qualities); heaven has them *minus* smelling, tasting, seeing, and touching (i.e. one quality).

I do not know what the Hindus mean by bringing *sound* into relation with heaven. Perhaps they mean something similar to what Homer, the poet of the ancient Greeks, said, "*Those invested with the seven melodies speak and give answer to each other in a pleasant tone.*" Thereby he meant the seven planets; as another poet says, "*The spheres endowed with different melodies are seven, moving eternally, praising the Creator, for it is he who holds them and embraces them unto the farthest end of the starless sphere.*" ...

The result of all these elements which we have enumerated, i.e. a compound of all of them, is the animal. The Hindus consider the plants as a species of animal as Plato also thinks that the plants have a sense, because they have the faculty of distinguishing between that which suits them and that which is detrimental to them. The animal is an animal as distinguished from a stone by virtue of its possession of the senses.

Indriyani

XV.-XIX. The senses are five, called *indriyani*, the hearing by the ear, the seeing by the eye, the smelling by the nose, the tasting by the tongue, and the touching by the skin.

Manas

XX. Next follows the will, which directs the senses in the exercise of their various functions, and which dwells in the heart. Therefore they call it *manas*.

Karmendriyani

XXI. XXV. The animal nature is rendered perfect by five *necessary functions*, which they call *karmendri-yani*, i.e. the senses of action. The former senses bring about learning and knowledge, the latter action and work. We shall call them the *necessaria*...

6. Belief in transmigration, Alberuni⁶

As the word of confession, "there is no god but God, Muhammad is his prophet," is the shibboleth of Islam, the Trinity that of Christianity, and the institute of the Sabbath that of Judaism, so metempsychosis is the shibboleth of the Hindu religion. Therefore he who does not believe in it does not belong to them, and is not reckoned as one of them. For they hold the following belief:

The soul, as long as it has not risen to the highest absolute intelligence, does not comprehend the totality of objects at once, or, as it were in no time. Therefore it must explore all particular beings and examine all the possibilities of existence; and as their number is, though out unlimited, still an enormous one, the soul wants an enormous space of time in order to finish the contemplation of such a multiplicity of objects. The soul acquires knowledge only by the contemplation of the individuals and the species, and of their peculiar actions and conditions. It gains experience from each object, and gathers thereby new knowledge.

However, these actions differ in the same measure as the three primary forces differ. Besides, the world is not left without some direction, being led, as it were, by a bridle and directed towards a definite scope. Therefore the imperishable souls wander about in perishable bodies conformably to the difference of their actions, as they prove to be good or bad. The object of the migration through the world of *reward* (i.e. heaven) is to direct the attention of the soul to the good, that it should become desirous of acquiring as much of it as possible. The object of its migration through the world of *punishment* (i.e. hell) is to direct its attention to the bad and abominable, that it should strive to keep as far as possible aloof from it.

The migration begins from low stages, and rises to higher and better ones, not the contrary, as we state on purpose, since the one is *a priori* as possible as the other. The difference of these lower and higher stages depends upon the difference of the actions, and this again results from the quantitative and qualitative diversity of the temperaments and the various degrees of

combinations in which they appear.

This migration lasts until the object aimed at has been completely attained both for the soul and matter; the *lower* aim being the disappearance of the shape of matter, except any such new formation as may appear desirable; the *higher* aim being the ceasing of the desire of the soul to learn what it did not know before, the insight of the soul into the nobility of its own being and its independent existence, its knowing that it can dispense with matter after it has become acquainted with the mean nature of matter and the instability of its shapes, with all that which matter offers to the senses, and with the truth of the tales about its delights. Then the soul turns away from matter; the connecting links are broken, the union is dissolved. Separation and dissolution take place, and the soul returns to its home, carrying with itself as much of the bliss of knowledge as sesame develops grains and blossoms, afterwards never separating from its oil. The intelligent being, intelligence and its object, are united and become one....

7. Ancient Greeks agreed in this belief, Alberuni⁷

The ancient Greeks agreed with the Hindus in this belief. Socrates says in the book *Phaedo*: "We are reminded in the tales of the ancients that the souls go from here to Hades, and then come from Hades to here; that the living originates from the dead, and that altogether things originate from their contraries. Therefore those who have died are among the living. Our souls lead an existence of their own in Hades. The soul of each man is glad or sorry at something, and contemplates this thing. This impressionable nature ties the soul to the body, nails it down in the body, and gives it, as it were, a bodily figure. The soul which is not pure cannot go to Hades. It quits the body still filled with its nature, and then migrates hastily into another body, in which it is, as it were, deposited and made fast. Therefore, it has no share in the living of the company of the unique, pure, divine essence....

As did Sufis

The same doctrine is professed by those Sufi who teach that this world is a sleeping soul and yonder world a soul awake, and who at the same time admit that God is immanent in certain places – e.g. in heaven – in the *seat* and the throne of God (mentioned in the *Koran*).

8. Greek views similar, Alberuni⁸

With regard to similar views of the ancient Greeks we can quote Ammonius, who relates the following as a sentence of Pythagoras: "Let your desire and exertion in this world be directed towards the union with the *First Cause*, which is the cause of the cause of your existence, that you may endure

for ever. You will be saved from destruction and from being wiped out; you will go to the world of the true sense, of the true joy, of the true glory, in everlasting joy and pleasures."

Further, Pythagoras says: "How can you hope for the state of detachment as long as you are clad in bodies? And how will you obtain liberation as long as you are incarcerated in them?"

Ammonius relates: "Empedocles and his successor as far as Heracles (*sic*) think that the soiled souls always remain commingled with the world until they ask the universal soul for help. The universal soul intercedes for it with the *Intelligence*, the latter with the Creator. The Creator affords something of his light to Intelligence; Intelligence affords something of it to the universal soul, which is immanent in this world. Now the soul wishes to be enlightened by Intelligence, until at last the individual soul recognises the universal soul, unites with it, and is attached to its world. But this is a process over which many ages must pass. Then the soul comes to a region where there is neither place nor time, nor anything of that which is in the world, like transient fatigue or joy."

Socrates says: "The soul on leaving space wanders to the holiness which lives for ever and exists eternally, being related to it. It becomes like holiness in duration; because it is by means of something like contact able to receive impressions from holiness. This, its susceptibility to impressions, is called *Intelligence*..."

9. The four foundations [*asas*], Gardizi⁹

Thus says [Abu] 'Abdallah Jayhani: the Indians are divided into 99 divisions which can be reduced to 42 varieties, and their basic foundations are fourfold. With God's help, I shall explain these four foundations (*asas*):

- (a) First come those affirming (the existence of) the Creator, may his majesty be exalted, and who believe in prophets, with regard to commands and interdictions, reward and punishment, that is to say that everyone finds reward or punishment to the measure of his works (*kirdar*).
- (b) (The second are those who) reject the prophets; they are called Shamani (*i.e.* Buddhists).
- (c) The third believe in God, may he be exalted, and in Paradise and Hell, saying that in going there they remain there for ever, for God's mercy and chastisement are uninterrupted.
- (d) The fourth class say that reward and punishment consist in transmigration, either in happiness or in misfortune, and that Paradise and Hell are in proportion to one's achievements or sins; they are not eternal and when one has obtained a reward (*padash*) proportionate to

one's deeds one comes out of them. These all are the saying of the Shamani who are (also) called Buddhists (*budi*).

10. Rules of readmission to the faith, Gardizi¹⁰

Whoever has left their religion is not readmitted except after he has made himself clean and they had purified him. The purification consists in shaving his head, his beard, his eyebrows and eye lashes, and any hair on his body. Then they collect five things: cow-dung, cow's urine, milk and butter and Ganges water, and mix all five, giving them to him to drink in a copper bowl to the amount of one *ritl.* of the same water they pour on his head, after which they rub (*tala*) his body, and thus for ten days, in proportion to his rebellion and his neglect of religion. Then he approaches a cow and prostrates himself before her.

11. Variety of beliefs, Al-Idrisi¹¹

Among the principal nations of India there are forty-two sects. Some recognise the existence of a Creator, but not of prophets; while others deny the existence of both. Some acknowledge the intercessory powers of graven stones, and others worship holy stones, on which butter and oil is poured. Some pay adoration to fire, and cast themselves into the flames. Others adore the sun, and consider it the creator and director of the world. Some worship trees; others pay adoration to serpents, which they keep in stables, and feed as well as they can, deeming this to be a meritorious work. Lastly, there are some who give themselves no trouble about any kind of devotion, and deny everything.

12. Worship individually, John of Monte Corvino¹²

They have no conscience of sin whatever. They have idol-houses in which they worship at almost all hours of the day; for they never join together in worship at any fixed hour, but each goes to worship when it pleases himself. And so they worship their idols in any part of these temples, either by day or by night. They frequently set forth their fasts and feasts, but they have no fixed recurring day to keep, either weekly or monthly.

13. Pray eastward, Athanasius Nikitin¹³

They offer their prayers towards the east, in the Russian way, lifting both hands high and putting them on the top of the head; then they lie down with the face to the ground, stretching their body to its full length, and such is their law...

Their Bootookhanies (places of worship) have no doors, and are situated towards the east; and the budhs (idols) also stand eastward.

B. IMAGE WORSHIP

1. Beginning of image worship, Alberuni¹⁴

It is well known that the popular mind leans towards the sensible world, and has an aversion to the world of abstract thought which is only understood by highly educated people, of whom in every time and every place there are only few. And as common people will only acquiesce in pictorial representations, many of the leaders of religious communities have so far deviated from the right path as to give such imagery in their books and houses of worship, like the Jews and Christians, and, more than all, the Manicheans. These words of mine would at once receive a sufficient illustration if, for example, a picture of the Prophet were made, or of Mekka and the Ka'ba, and were shown to an uneducated man or woman. Their joy in looking at the thing would bring them to kiss the picture, to rub their cheeks against it, and to roll themselves in the dust before it, as if they were seeing not the picture, but the original, and were in this way, as if they were present in the holy places, performing the rites of pilgrimage, the great and the small ones.

This is the cause which leads to the manufacture of idols, monuments in honour of certain much venerated persons, prophets, sages, angels, destined to keep alive their memory when they are absent or dead, to create for them a lasting place of grateful veneration in the hearts of men when they die. But when much time passes by after the setting up of the monument, generations and centuries, its origin is forgotten, it becomes a matter of custom, and its veneration a rule for general practice. This being deeply rooted in the nature of man, the legislators of antiquity tried to influence them from this weak point of theirs. Therefore they made the veneration of pictures and similar monuments obligatory on them, as is recounted in historic records, both for the times before and after the Deluge. Some people even pretend to know that all mankind, before God sent them his prophets, were one large idolatrous body.

The followers of the Thora fix the beginning of idolatry in the days of Serugh, the great-grandfather of Abraham...

2. Ancient Greeks, Arabs and idol worship, Alberuni¹⁵

The ancient Greeks, also, considered the idols as mediators between themselves and the *First Cause*, and worshipped them under the names of the stars and the highest substances... When the heathen Arabs had imported into their country idols from Syria, they also worshipped them, hoping that they would intercede for them with God.

SOME OF THE DEITIES WORSHIPPED

3. Maha-Kal, Gardizi¹⁶

They have an idol called Maha-Kal which has four hands and is sky-blue. He has much hair, his tusks come out and his belly is protruding, while on his back an elephant's skin is thrown from which blood is dripping. On his head and shoulders there are two snakes; in three of his hands he holds a snake, a skull, and a stick, while his fourth hand is raised towards his head. On his head he wears a crown made of skulls. They say that this was a demon (*div*) whom they worship in view of his exalted state, as he had many virtues and many vices. Therefore in India they build many temples (to him) and daily the adherents of their religion visit the temple, prostrate themselves before the (idol), and circumambulate him. They have a place called UIJAYN with a large idol representing (Maha-kal). They take before him their needs in this lower world and the world beyond and from him learn charms (*aza'im*). They do wonderful things saying that they all are from (Maha-Kal's) teaching. Men come before him and say: "give me this woman, or give me that thing." Some people come to worship him while for several days they refrain from food and humble themselves asking him for their needs. Some take an iron lamp and shaping its bottom like a spear place it on their palm and press it until it has pierced the palm and made a hole in it. Then they light the lamp and kneel down on both knees before the idol with lamentation saying: "accept from us our visit to this house".

4. Idol with special treasury, Gardizi¹⁷

The sect called DIVATRI have a custom to make an idol and to set it on a calf. Before it (or, for it: *az bar-i u*) they pitch a high tent (*qubba*). Then they pull the calf and people circumambulate it, striking cymbals and playing on stringed instruments. On that day all the courtesans (*qahba*) that be in the whole country assemble there. They sit on horses and elephants and bedeck themselves with many ornaments, men marching in front of them, and thus they circumambulate the idol. This happens in spring and when that day is over they carry the idol back to its place. The idol has a special treasury in which other idols are preserved in the shape of kings, chiefs of various countries, and leaders of other sects. They have (other) idols shaped like horses, birds, and (grazing) animals. They display them on that day and around them people play, but when the festival is over, they take them all into the treasury.

5. Durga [?], Gardizi¹⁸

Another sect is called B.KTI. Their custom is to make an idol in the shape of a woman with a crown on her head. She has four hands: with one she

touches a nail (*mikh*), with another she draws a sword, in the third she holds a *bajjar* (*vajra*), and in the fourth a *chakkar* (*chakra*), these two latter being Indian weapons. When the Sun reaches (the zodiac of) Libra (22nd September – 22nd October), they adorn this idol and before it place a throne (*takht*) on which they display whatever plants they can find and twigs of trees. And they bring together perfumes as well. Then they offer sacrifices: they bring buffaloes and sheep of various kinds placing grass before them that they may eat it. Whenever an animal raises its head they strike it with a sword in front of the idol and this is their sacrifice. Thus they carry on till the end of the festival. This is done by the commoners. As to their kinds, they find a man, red-haired and green-eyed. Then before the idol they fix a sharp chopper (*katara*) blade upwards, and tell the man to lay (his head) on the chopper. A man strikes him on the head so that the chopper penetrates up to the handle into his forehead and he dies on the spot (*dar sa at*). They say that in this way they acquire a great reward (*muzd*). At that moment they display great joy, entertain guests, and drink wine.

C. SOME IMPORTANT TEMPLES

1. Temple at Multan, Abu Zaidu-l Hasan of Sira¹⁹

The idol called Multan is situated in the environs of Mansura, and people come on pilgrimages to it from many months distance. They bring thither the Indian aloes called *al kamruni*, from Kamrun, the name of the country in which it grows. These aloes are of the finest quality. They are given to the ministers of the temple for use as incense. These aloes are sometimes worth as much as two hundred dinars a *mana*. The aloes are so soft that they will receive the impression of a seal. Merchants buy them of the ministers of the temple.

2. The famous temple in Multan, Istakhari²⁰

There is an idol there held in great veneration by the Hindus, and every year people from the most distant parts undertake pilgrimages to it, and bring to it vast sums of money, which they expend upon the temple and on those who lead there a life of devotion. The temple of the idol is a strong edifice, situated in the most populous part of the city, in the market of Multan, between the bazar of the ivory dealers and the shops of the coppersmiths. The idol is placed under a cupola in the midst of the building and the ministers of the idol and those devoted to its service dwell around the cupola. In Multan there are no men either of Hind or Sind who worship idols except those who worship this idol and in this temple. The idol has a human shape, and seated with its legs bent in a quadrangular posture on a throne made of brick and mortar. Its

whole body is covered with a red skin like Morocco leather, and nothing but its eyes are visible. Some believe that the body is made of wood, some deny this; but the body is not allowed to be uncovered to decide the point. The eyes of the idol are precious gems, and its head is covered with a crown of gold. It sits in a quadrangular position on the throne, its hands resting upon its knees, with the fingers closed, so that only four can be counted. When the Indians make war upon them and endeavour to seize the idol, the inhabitants bring it out, pretending that they will break it and burn it. Upon this the Indians retire, otherwise they would destroy Multan.

3. The idol at Multan, Alberuni²¹

A famous idol of theirs was that of Multan, dedicated to the sun, and therefore called *Aditya*. It was of wood and covered with red Cordovan leather; in its two eyes were two red rubies. It is said to have been made in the last Kritayuga. Suppose that it was made in the very end of Kritayuga, the time which has since elapsed amounts to 216,432 years. When Muhammad Ibn Alkasim Ibn Almunabbih conquered Multan, he inquired how the town had become so very flourishing and so many treasures had there been accumulated, and then he found out that this idol was the cause, for there came pilgrims from all sides to visit it. Therefore he thought it best to have the idol where it was, but he hung a piece of cow's-flesh on its neck by way of mockery. On the same place a mosque was built. When then the Karmatians occupied Multan, Jalam Ibn Shaiban, the usurper, broke the idol into pieces and killed its priests. He made his mansion, which was a castle built of brick on an elevated place, the mosque instead of the old mosque, which he ordered to be shut from hatred against anything that had been done under the dynasty of the Caliphs of the house of 'Umayya. When afterwards the blessed Prince Mahmud swept away their rule from those countries, he made again the old mosque the place of the Friday worship, and the second one was left to decay. At present it is only a barn-floor, where bunches of Hinna (*lawsonia inermis*) are bound together.

4. Cakrasvamin temple at Thaneshwar, Alberuni²²

The city of Taneshar is highly venerated by the Hindus. The idol of that place is called *Cakrasvamin*, i.e. the owner of the *cakra*, a weapon...It is of bronze, and is nearly the size of a man. It is now lying in the hippodrome in Ghazna, together with the *Lord of Somanath*, which is a representation of the *penis* of Mahadeva, called *Linga*. of Somanath we shall hereafter speak in the proper place. This Cakrasvamin is said to have been made in the time of Bharata as a memorial of wars connected with this name.

5. The idol of Sharda in Kashmir, Alberuni²³

In Inner Kashmir, about two or three days' journey from the capital in the direction towards the mountains of Bolor, there is a wooden idol called *Sarada*, which is much venerated and frequented by pilgrims.

6. Somnath, Alberuni²⁴

The Linga he [the moon] raised was the stone of Somanath, for *soma* means the moon and *natha* means *master*; so that the whole word means *master of the moon*. The image was destroyed by the Prince Mahmud – may God be merciful to him! – A.H. 416. He ordered the upper part to be broken and the remainder to be transported to his residence, Ghaznin, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels, and embroidered garments. Part of it has been thrown into the hippodrome of the town, together with the *Cakrasvamin*, an idol of bronze, that had been brought from Taneshar. Another part of the idol from Somanath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghaznin, on which people rub their feet to clean them from dirt and wet...

The educated Hindus determine the daily phases of the tides by the rising and setting of the moon, the monthly phases by the increase and waning of the moon; but the physical cause of both phenomena is not understood by them.

It is flow and ebb to which Somanath owes its name (*i.e.* master of the moon); for the stone (or *linga*) of Somanath was originally erected on the coast, a little less than three miles west of the mouth of the river Sarsuti, east of the golden fortress Baroi, which had appeared as a dwelling-place for Vasudeva, not far from the place where he and his family were killed, and where they were burned. Each time when the moon rises and sets, the water of the ocean rises in the flood so as to cover the place in question. When, then, the moon reaches the meridian of noon and midnight, the water recedes in the ebb, and the place becomes again visible. Thus the moon was perpetually occupied in serving the idol and bathing it. Therefore the place was considered as sacred to the moon. The fortress which contained the idol and its treasures was not ancient, but was built only about a hundred years ago...

The fact that the just-mentioned fortress is said to have appeared out of the ocean is not astonishing for that particular part of the ocean; for the Dibajat islands (Maledives and Laccadives) originate in a similar manner, rising out of the ocean as sand-downs....

7. Somnath, Zakariya Al Kazwini²⁵

Somnat – A celebrated city of India, situated on the shore of the sea, and washed by its waves. Among the wonders of that place was the temple in which was placed the idol called Somnat. This idol was in the middle of the temple without anything to support it from below, or to suspend it from above. It was

held in the highest honour among the Hindus, and whoever beheld it floating in the air was struck with amazement, whether he was a Musulman or an infidel. The Hindus used to go on pilgrimage to it whenever there was an eclipse of the moon, and would then assemble there to the number of more than a hundred thousand. They believed that the souls of men used to meet there after separation from the body, and that the idol used to incorporate them at its pleasure in other bodies, in accordance with their doctrine of transmigration. The ebb and flow of the tide was considered to be the worship paid to the idol by the sea. Everything of the most precious was brought there as offerings, and the temple was endowed with more than 10,000 villages. There is a river (the Ganges) which is held sacred, between which and Somnat the distance is 200 parasangs. They used to bring the water of this river to Somnat every day, and wash the temple with it. A thousand brahmans were employed in worshipping the idol and attending on the visitors, and 500 damsels sung and danced at the door – all these were maintained upon the endowments of the temple. The edifice was built upon fifty-six pillars of teak, covered with lead. The shrine of the idol was dark; but was lighted by jewelled chandeliers of great value. Near it was a chain of gold weighing 200 mans. When a portion (watch) of the night closed, this chain used to be shaken like bells to rouse a fresh lot of brahmans to perform worship. When the Sultan Yaminu-d Daula Mahmud bin Subuktigin went to wage religious war against India, he made great efforts to capture and destroy Somnat, in the hope that the Hindus would then become Muhammadans. He arrived there in the middle of Zi-l k'ada, 416 A.H. (December, 1025 A.D.). The Indians made a desperate resistance. They would go weeping and crying for help into the temple, and then issue forth to battle and fight till all were killed. The number of the slain exceeded 50,000. The king looked upon the idol with wonder, and gave orders for the seizing of the spoil, and the appropriation of the treasures. There were many idols of gold and silver and vessels set with jewels, all of which had been sent there by the greatest personages in India. The value of the things found in the temples of the idols exceeded twenty thousand thousand dinars. When the king asked his companions what they had to say about the marvel of the idol, and of its staying in the air without prop or support, several maintained that it was upheld by some hidden support. The king directed a person to go and feel all around and above and below it with a spear, which he did, but met with no obstacle. One of the attendants then stated his opinion that the canopy was made of loadstone, and the idol of iron and that the ingenious builder had skillfully contrived that the magnet should not exercise a greater force on anyone side – hence the idol was suspended in the middle. Some coincided, others differed. Permission was obtained from the Sultan to remove some stones from the top of the canopy to settle the point. When two stones were removed from the

summit the idol swerved on one side, when more were taken away it inclined still further until at last it rested on the ground.

8. The attack on Somnath by Alauddin Khalji, Abdullah Wassaf²⁶

When Sultan 'Alau-d din, the Sultan of Delhi, was well established in the centre of his dominion, and had cut off the heads of his enemies and slain them, and had imparted rest to his subjects from the fountain of his kindness and justice, the vein of the zeal of religion beat high for the subjection of infidelity and destruction of idols, and in the month of Zi'l-hijja 698 H. (1298 A.D.) his brother Malik Mu'izzu-d din and Nusrat Khan, the chief pillar of the state and the leader of his armies, a generous and intelligent warrior, were sent to Kambayat, the most celebrated of the cities of Hind in population and wealth. Its air is pure, its water clear, and the circumjacent country beautiful and charming both in scenery and buildings. With a view to holy war, and not for the lust of conquest, he enlisted under their banners about 14,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, which, in their language, are called *dak*.

They went by daily marches through the hills, from stage to stage, and when they arrived at their destination at early dawn they surrounded Kambayat, and the idolaters were awakened from their sleepy state of carelessness and were taken by surprise, not knowing where to go, and mothers forgot their children and dropped them from their embrace. The Muhammadan forces began to "kill and slaughter on the right and on the left unmercifully, throughout the impure land, for the sake of Islam," and blood flowed in torrents. They plundered gold and silver to an extent greater than can be conceived, and an immense number of brilliant precious stones, such as pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, etc., as well as a great variety of cloths, both silk and cotton, stamped, embroidered, and coloured.

They took captive a great number of handsome and elegant maidens, amounting to 20,000, and children of both sexes, "more than the pen can enumerate," and thirteen enormous elephants, whose motions would put the earth in tremor." In short, the Muhammadan army brought the country to utter ruin, and destroyed the lives of the inhabitants, and plundered the cities, and captured their offspring, so that many temples were deserted and the idols were broken and trodden under foot, the largest of which was one called Somnat, fixed upon stone, polished like a mirror, of charming shape and admirable workmanship. It stood seven yards high. Its position was such as if it was about to move, and its expression such as if it was about to speak. If the introducer of idolatry were to look on it he would become enamoured of its beauty. The infidels objected to people going near it. Its head was adorned with a crown set with gold and rubies and pearls and other precious stones, so that it was impossible for the eyes to trace the redness of the gold on account

of the excessive lustre of the jewels, and a necklace of large shining pearls, like the belt of Orion, depended from the shoulder towards the side of the body.

The Muhammadan soldiers plundered all those jewels and rapidly set themselves to demolish the idol. The surviving infidels were deeply affected with grief, and they engaged "to pay a thousand pieces of gold" as a ransom for the idol, but they were indignantly rejected, and the idol was destroyed, and "its limbs, which were anointed with ambergris and perfumed, were cut off. The fragments were conveyed to Delhi, and the entrance of the Jami' Masjid was paved with them, that people might remember and talk of this brilliant victory." "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. Amen!"

After some time, among the ruins of the temples, a most beautiful jasper-coloured stone was discovered, on which one of the merchants had designed some beautiful figures of fighting men and other ornamental figures of globes, lamps, etc., and on the margin of it were sculptured verses from the Kur'an. This stone was sent as an offering to the shrine of the pole of saints, Shaikh Murshid Abu Is'hak Ibrahim bin Shahriar. At that time they were building a lofty octagonal dome to the tomb. The stone was placed at the right of the entrance. "At this time, that is, in the year 707 H. (1307 A.D.), 'Alau-d din is the acknowledged Sultan of this country. On all its borders there are infidels, whom it is his duty to attack in the prosecution of a holy war, and return laden with countless booty."

9. Idol gives response from its mouth, Odoric of Pordenone²⁷

They worship also another idol, which is half man and half ox. And this idol giveth responses out of its mouth, and oftentimes demandeth the blood of forty virgins to be given to it. For men and women there vow their sons and their daughters to that idol, just as here they vow to place them in some religious order. And in this manner many perish...

10. A wonderful idol at Malabar, Odoric of Pordenone²⁸

There is likewise in this kingdom [Mabar] a certain wonderful idol, which all the provinces of India greatly revere. It is as big as St. Christopher is commonly certain represented by the painters, and it is entirely of gold, seated on a great throne, which is also of gold. And round its neck it hath a collar of gems of immense value. And the church of this idol is also of pure gold, roof (and walls) and pavement. People come to say their prayers to the idol from great distances, just as Christian folk go from far on pilgrimage to St. Peter's. And the manner of those who come is thus:- Some travel with a halter round their necks; and some with their hands upon a board, which is tied to their necks; others with a knife stuck in the arm, which they never remove until

they arrive before the idol, so that the arm is then all in a slough. And some have quite a different way of doing. For these as they start from their houses take three steps, and at the fourth they make a prostration at full length upon the ground. And then they take a thurible and incense the whole length of that prostration. And thus they do continually until they reach the idol, so that sometimes when they go through this operation it take a very great while before they do reach the idol. But when those who are going along in this way wish to turn aside to do anything, they make a mark there to show how far they have gone, and so they (come back upon this, and) continue until they reach the idol.

11. Idol taken out in procession, Nicolo Conti²⁹

In Bizenegalia also, at a certain time of the year, their idol is carried through the city, placed between two chariots, in which are young women richly adorned, who sing hymns to the god, and accompanied by a great concourse of people. Many, carried away by the fervour of their faith, cast themselves on the ground before the wheels, in order that they may be crushed to death, a mode of death which they say is very acceptable to their god. Others, making an incision in their side, and inserting a rope thus through their body, hang themselves to the chariot by way of ornament, and thus suspended and half dead accompany their idol. This kind of sacrifice they consider the best and most acceptable of all.

12. Vasco da Gama's delegation mistakes a temple for a church³⁰

When we arrived [at Calicut] they took us to a large church, and this is what we saw:—

The body of the church is as large as a monastery, all built of hewn stone and covered with tiles. At the main entrance rises a pillar of bronze as high as a mast, on the top of which was perched a bird, apparently a cock. In addition to this, there was another pillar as high as a man, and very stout. In the centre of the body of the church rose a chapel all built of hewn stone, with a bronze door sufficiently wide for a man to pass, and stone steps leading up to it. Within this sanctuary stood a small image which they said represented Our Lady. Along the walls, by the main entrance, hung seven small bells. In this church the captain-major said his prayers, and we with him.

We did not go within the chapel, for it is the custom that only certain servants of the church, called *quafees* [Brahmin priests], should enter. These *quafees* wore some threads passing over the left shoulder and under the right arm, in the same manner as our deacons wear the stole. They threw holy water over us, and gave us some white earth, which the Christians of this country are in the habit of putting on their foreheads, breasts, around the neck, and on

the forearms. They threw holy water upon the captain-major and gave him some of the earth, which he gave in charge of someone, giving them to understand that he would put it on later.

Many other saints were painted on the walls of the church, wearing crowns. They were painted variously, with teeth protruding an inch from the mouth, and four or five arms.

Below this church there was a large masonry tank, similar to many others which we had seen along the road.

D. POPULAR PILGRIMAGE SITES

1. Holy ponds, Alberuni³¹

We have already quoted Hindu traditions to the effect that in the Dvipas there are rivers as holy as the Ganges. In every place to which some particular holiness is ascribed, the Hindus construct ponds intended for the ablutions. In this they have attained to a very high degree of art, so that our people (the Muslims), when they see them, wonder at them, and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them. They build them of great stones of an enormous bulk, joined to each other by sharp and strong crampirons, in the form of steps (or terraces) like so many ledges and these terraces run all around the pond, reaching to a height of more than a man's stature. On the surface of the stones between two terraces they construct staircases rising like pinnacles, Thus the first steps or terraces are like roads (leading round the pond), and the pinnacles are steps (leading up and down). If ever so many people descend to the pond whilst others ascend, they do not meet each other, and the road is never blocked up, because there are so many terraces, and the ascending person can always turn aside to another terrace than that on which the descending people go. By this arrangement all troublesome thronging is avoided.

In Multan there is a pond in which the Hindus worship by bathing themselves, if they are not prevented.

The Samhita of Varahamihira relates that in Taneshar there is a pond which the Hindus visit from afar to bathe in its water. Regarding the cause of this custom they relate the following: The waters of all the other holy ponds visit this particular pond at the time of an eclipse. Therefore, if a man washes in it, it is as if he had washed in every single one of all of them...

2. Banaras, Alberuni³²

The Hindus have some places which are venerated for reasons connected with their law and religion, e.g. Benares. For their anchorites wander to it and

stay there for ever as the dwellers of the Ka'ba stay for ever in Mekka. They want to live there to the end of their lives, that their reward after death should be the better for it. They say that a murderer is held responsible for his crime and punished with a punishment due to his guilt, except in case he enters the city of Benares, where he obtains pardon.

3. Pushkar, Alberuni³³

A similar place is Pukara...Outside the town, in three places, they have constructed ponds which stand in high veneration, and are places of worship.

4. Thaneshwar, Alberuni³⁴

Another place of the kind is Taneshar, also called Kurukshetra, *i.e.* the land of Kuru, who was a peasant, a pious, holy man, who worked miracles by divine power. Therefore the country was called after him, and venerated for his sake. Besides, Taneshar is the theatre of the exploits of Vasudeva in the wars of Bharata and of the destruction of the evildoers. It is for this reason that people visit the place.

5. Mathura, Alberuni³⁵

Mahura, too, is a holy place, crowded with Brahmans. It is venerated because Vasudeva was there born and brought up, in a place in the neighbourhood called Nandagola.

6. Kashmir and Multan, Alberuni³⁶

Nowadays the Hindus also visit Kashmir. Lastly, they used to visit Multan before its idol-temple was destroyed.

7. Hardwar, Yazdi³⁷

The valley of Kupila is situated at the foot of a mountain by which the river Ganges passes. Fifteen *kos* higher up there is a stone in the form of a cow, and the water of the river flows out of the mouth of that cow. The infidels of India worship this cow; and come hither from all quarters, from distances even of a year's journey, to visit it. They bring here and cast into the river the ashes of their dead whose corpses have been burned, believing this to be the means of salvation. They throw gold and silver into the river; they go down alive into the river, bathe their feet, sprinkle water on their heads, and have their heads and beards shaved. This they consider to be an act of devotion, just as the Muhammadans consider the pilgrimage to Mecca a pious work.

E. CERTAIN OTHER CUSTOMS

1. Ganges washes sins, Gardizi³⁸

Another group are the GANGAYATRI. They are found at any place in India. Their law is that anyone who has committed a sin which would offend his parents, or (any other) wicked deed, wherever he be of the far or near places of India, he travels from there to the Ganges and washes himself in its water, and this is the purification (*kaffara*) of his sin. Should he die on that journey, this too will be accepted from him.

2. Water worshipped, Gardizi³⁹

Another sect is called JALA-BHAKTI, i.e. 'water -worshippers'. They say that on the waters there is an angel and water is the origin of all plants and animals. It is the origin of life: wherever it be plentiful, there plants, the breeding of animals and the prosperity of the world are on the increase. A man (of theirs) enters the water up to his waist and stays there (*andar u*) for more than two hours. He holds sweet basil (*sipargham*) in his hands and splits it into small pieces (*para*) which he throws into the water as he swims (*ashna*) and sings something. When he wants to retire he stirs the water with his hand and scooping up a little pours it over his head and the parts of the body which are not submerged. Then he goes, after a prostration before the water.

3. Fire worshipped Gardizi⁴⁰

Another sect is called AGNI-HOTRI, i.e. 'fire worshippers'. According to them Fire is the greatest of the elements and substances. Whoever burns himself in it purifies himself of all impurities (*palidiha*), while the fire becomes exalted (*buzurg*). They make a quadrangular hole in which they kindle a great fire. Then they bring food, garments, gold, silver, precious stones, cereals (*dangu*), and perfumes and throw them into the flames, as they circumambulate them. Great kings belong to this sect.

4. Moon worshipped, Gardizi⁴¹

Another sect is called CHANDRA-BHAKTI (spelt *J.ndr.rbhaktiyan*), i.e. 'Moon-worshippers'. According to them the Moon is one of the great angels. Of him they have made an idol seated on a calf. Before him are four (other) idols. In his hand he holds a jewel. Every month these people fast for half a month (or, during the middle of the month?). They do not break their fast until the new moon appears. And when the moon rises they go up on the roofs, sprinkle perfumes, and look at the moon with pleasant faces. Then they come down to their homes, break the fast, and go before the idols stamping their feet and playing.

5. Sun worshipped, Gardizi⁴²

Another sect is called ADITYA-BHAKTI (spelt *Awbhaktiyan*), i.e. ‘Sun-worshippers’. They have made an idol seated on a calf. Four horses are harnessed to (the idol) and before the idol there is an angel whom they worship prostrating themselves before him, burning incense and playing the flute and striking cymbals. The idol has numerous estates and much grain. And they tell many stories about this idol. The sick come and fast before him for a day and a night, which they call *lak-han*, (hoping to) dream a dream, (after which) they are told that their wish has been fulfilled, and break their fast. There were two of these idols but Amir Mahmud, God have mercy on his soul, pulled down one of them, and the other still exists in Hindustan.

6. Throwing self before chariot, Odoric of Pordenone⁴³

And hard by the church of this idol there is a lake, made by hand, into which the pilgrims who come thither cast gold or silver or precious stones, in honour of the idol, and towards the maintenance of the church, so that much gold and silver and many precious stones have been accumulated therein. And thus when it is desired to do any work upon the church, they make search in the lake and find all that hath been cast into it.

But annually on the recurrence of the day when that idol was made, the folk of the country come and take it down, and put it in a fine chariot; and then the king and queen and all the pilgrims, and the whole body of the people, join together and draw forth from the church with loud singing of songs and all kinds of music; and many maidens go before it by two and two chanting in a marvellous manner. And many pilgrims who have come to this feast cast themselves under the chariot, so that its wheels may go over them, saying that they desire to die for their God. And the car passes over them, and crushes and cuts them in sunder, and so they perish on the spot. And after this fashion they drag the idol to a certain customary place, and then they drag him back to where he was formerly, with singing and playing as before. And thus not a year passes but there perish more than five hundred men in this manner; and their bodies they burn, declaring that they are holy, having thus devoted themselves to death for their God.

And another custom they have of this kind. One will come saying: “I desire to sacrifice myself for my God?” And then his friends and kinsfolk, and all the players of the country, assemble together to make a feast for him who is determined to die for his God. And they hang round his neck five very sharp knives, and lead him thus to the presence of the idol with loud songs. Then he takes one of those sharp knives and calls out with a loud voice: “Thus I cut my flesh for my God”; and cutting a piece of his flesh wherever he may choose, he casteth it in the face of the idol; and saying again: “I devote myself to die for my God,” he endeth by slaying himself there. And straightway they take his body

and burn it, for they look on him as a saint, having thus slain himself for his idol. And many other things greatly to be marvelled at are done by these people, which are by no means to be written.

7. Self-immolation in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁴⁴

In this Greater India many sacrifice themselves to idols in this way. When they are sick, or involved in any grave mischance, they vow themselves to the idol if they should happen to be delivered. Then, when they have recovered, they fatten themselves for one or two years continually, eating and drinking fat things, etc. And when another festival comes round, they cover themselves with flowers and perfumes, and crown themselves with white garlands, and go with singing and playing before the idol when it is carried through the land (like the image of the Virgin Mary here among us at the Rogation tides); and those men who are sacrificing themselves to the idol carry a sword with two handles, like those (knives) which are used in currying leather; and, after they have shown off a great deal, they put the sword to the back of the neck, cutting strongly with a vigorous exertion of both hands, and so cut off their own heads before the idol.

8. Drowning in the Ganges, Ibn Battuta⁴⁵

The Indians have a similar practice of drowning themselves and many of them do so in the river Ganges, the river to which they go on pilgrimage, and into which the ashes of those who are burned are cast. They say that it is a river of Paradise. When one of them comes to drown himself he says to those present with him, "Do not think that I drown myself for any worldly reason or through penury; my purpose is solely to seek approach to Kusay," Kusay [Krishna?] being the name of God in their language. He then drowns himself, and when he is dead they take him out and burn him and cast his ashes into this river.

9. Tulsi sacred, Odoric of Pordenone⁴⁶

In this country every man hath before his house a plant of twigs as thick as a pillar would be here, and this never withers as long as it gets water. And many other strange things are there which it would be pretty to hear, tell.

F. COW WORSHIP

1. Love of animals, cows sacred, Al-Idrisi⁴⁷

The inhabitants of Nahrwara...have a great veneration for oxen, and by a privilege confined to the species, they inter them after death. When these

animals are enfeebled by age, and are unable to work, they free them from all labour and provide them with food without exacting any return.

2. Oxen sacred, John of Monte Corvino⁴⁸

Oxen are with these people sacred animals, and they eat not their flesh for the worship they bear them. But they make use of cows' milk, and put their cattle to labour like other folk.

3. Worship of ox, Marco Polo⁴⁹

The greater part of the idolatrous inhabitants of this kingdom show particular reverence to the ox; and none will from any consideration be induced to eat the flesh of oxen. But there is a particular class of men termed gaudi, who although they may eat of the flesh, yet dare not to kill the animal; but when they find a carcass, whether it has died a natural death or otherwise, the gaudi eat of it; and all descriptions of people daub their houses with cow-dung.

4. Hair of a wild bull prized, Marco Polo⁵⁰

Those amongst them who pay adoration to the ox, take with them, when they go to battle, some of the hair of a wild bull, which they attach to the manes of their horses, believing its virtue and efficacy to be such, that every one who carries it about with him is secure from all kind of danger. On this account the hair of the wild bull sells for a high price in these countries.

5. People at Polumbum [Kulam] worship of ox, Odoric of Pordenone⁵¹

All the people of this country worship the ox for their god [and they eat not his flesh]; for they say that he is, as it were, a sacred creature. Six years they make him to work for them, and the seventh year they give him rest from all labour, and turn him out in some appointed public place, declaring him thenceforward to be a consecrated animal. And they observe the following abominable superstition. Every morning they take two basins of gold or silver, and when the ox is brought from the stall they put these under him and catch his urine in one and his dung in the other. With the former they wash their faces and with the latter they daub themselves, first on the middle of the forehead; secondly, on the balls of both cheeks; and lastly in the middle of the chest. And when they have thus anointed themselves in four places they consider themselves to be sanctified (for the day). Thus do the common people; and thus do the king and queen likewise.

6. Cow holy in India the Less, Friar Jordanus⁵²

The Indians, both of this India and of the other Indies, never kill an ox, but rather honour him like a father; and some, even perhaps the majority,

worship him. They will more readily spare him who has slain five men than him who has slain one ox, saying that it is no more lawful to kill an ox than to kill one's father. This is because oxen do all their services, and moreover furnish them with milk and butter, and all sorts of good things. The great lords among the idolaters, every morning when they rise, and before they go anywhither, make the fattest cows come before them, and lay their hands upon them, and then rub their own faces, believing that after this they can have no ailment.

7. Sacredness of cow, Abder Razzak⁵³

In this harbour [Calicut] one may find everything that can be desired. One thing alone is forbidden, namely, to kill a cow, or to eat its flesh: whosoever should be discovered slaughtering or eating one of these animals, would be immediately punished with death. So respected is the cow in these parts, that the inhabitants take its dung when dry and rub their foreheads with it.

8. Worship cow at Calicut, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano⁵⁴

The lord of the city is an idolater, and so likewise are all the people. They worship an ox, or the sun, and also various idols, which they themselves make. When these people die they are burnt: their customs and usages are various; inasmuch as some kill all kinds of animals excepting oxen and cows: if any one were to kill or wound these, he would be himself immediately slain, because, they are objects of worship. Others, again, never eat flesh or fish, or anything that has had life.

G. ASCETICS

1. Wandering mendicants, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*⁵⁵

There are some people in India who are dedicated to a life of wandering in the forests and the mountains. They seldom communicate with human beings, and sometimes eat the herbs and fruits of the forests. They wear iron rings through their penis, so that they may not be able to cohabit with women. There are some others who are naked. Then some of them set themselves up towards the sun and encounter in naked except that they put on something made of the leopard skin. I saw one of these men just as I described and then departed. After sixteen years, I returned once again and [to my surprise] I found him in the same state [as I had left him in]. I was surprised that his eyes did not melt away due to the heat of the sun.

2. The Bhadruri, Gardizi⁵⁶

Another sect are the BHADRURI (?)... Their law is to keep the hair long, letting it down straight from every side so that they look out from underneath that hair. They wear vests (*sidra*), letting their hands out of (?) their sleeves and keeping their chests uncovered. Round their waists they attach chains and each is accompanied by another man who holds him by that chain. They do not drink wine. Their pilgrimage is to a mountain called Chun-ghar (Junagarh?). They repair thither to lament (*nauha* for *tavajjuh*) Bhadruz (*sic*). They occupy that mountain and on it they have built a large house (on which) they have represented (*nigashta*) Bhadruz on a horse. This building has a door on entering which they tie up their mouths, lest their breath should touch the idol's body. There they perform sacrifices. When these men visit other countries they tell the stories on which their creed is based, and in the meantime they nod. Apart from that house they have other houses they have other houses (in which) the likeness of Bhadru (*sic*) and his two brothers JUN and M.RS are represented, and idols are found (in them), but they venerate that house on Mt. Junghar (above all).

3. Munis, Gardizi⁵⁷

Another sect is that called MUNI, i.e. 'the silent'. They do not harm or pain anybody, and do not speak to anyone (*har kas*). They eat what food they can find, except meat, and do not marry.

4. The Kesa-karti [Jain munis?], Gardizi⁵⁸

Another sect is called K.STK.RTI [*kesa-karti*, cutting hair] and SID.R. They are naked and cover only their privy parts. On their necks they wear a staff, and suspended on it are a gourd in which there is everything and also a bag (*kharita*) with food. In the other (?) hand they hold a fan of peacock's feathers. These people like discussions (*ahl-I jadal?*). With each of them comes a disciple. They have chairs on which they sit and all day long they have no other business but to pluck hair out of their heads, brows, eyelashes, and limbs. By that they intend to mortify (*adhab*) their body. They say that there was a king who was attracted towards their religion. So they bared his body and said: "all this hair has to be plucked out and while this is done thou must not shout but only say: 'o comfort' (*ay rahata*). When much of it was plucked out and the operation became painful, he shouted and they said: "thou hast spoilt thy business". He became silent and kept saying (*be-guftan istad*): 'o comfort'. They said: "if thou goest on saying like this till all thy hair is gone thou shalt enter paradise". As they went on with their operation he felt great pain and could stand it no more. So he withdrew himself from their hands and returned to his own status and religion. When asked about the reason, he answered:

"one must flee from a religion whose very beginning [i.e., the declaration 'o comfort'] is a lie".

5. Those who burn themselves, Gardizi⁵⁹

Among them there are people who burn themselves in the fire, doing this in the following way. They dig a ditch near a water, and fill it with burning stuff (*atash*). That man (of theirs) comes and fumigates himself, prostrates himself before everybody, and throws himself into the ditch. When he is on fire he comes out and entering the water plunges into it for so long that he is nearly dead. Then entering the fire and water alternately he goes on until he dies. Should he die in the fire or in the water, they proclaim him one of Paradise, but should he die between the two they become afflicted (*tafta*) and say: "he has not reached Paradise."

6. Other forms of asceticism, Gardizi⁶⁰

Some heat stones and collecting them while they are very hot place these burning pieces of stone on the belly (of the man who wishes to undergo the test) until a hole appears in his belly and his bowels (*rudagan*) fall out and he dies. Some others kindle four fires and stand in the middle holding one foot in one hand and resting on the other; and thus they remain until they are on fire and the contents of their entrails (*rudab*) spurt from them and finally they fall of weakness and die being consumed by the fire.

Some carve pieces out of their thighs and flesh and cutting them into (small) slices throw them into the fire, while singing some of those incantations (*khwanish*). Men gather round such a man, praise him, incite him (to seek) his reward (*muzd*), and pray that the Almighty grant them the same rank. Thus they go on until the man dies...

Starve to death

Others again who kill themselves by hunger and thirst are called ANSHI [not eating]. Some die on the twentieth day and some survive to thirty days. First they are unable to walk, then to sit, then to utter a word, then their sense are annihilated and they become like blocks of dry wood and finally they grow motionless and numb (*bi-y-afsurand*).

The Trisuli

A sect called TRISULI has the following custom. There is a tree named *batu* [banyan] whose nature is such that coming out of the soil it grows up and then long twigs shoot out of it in every direction, and reaching the soil take root and grow up again and again. Left alone they would cover the province, but some (of the twigs) are pruned and some set fire to, so that it should acquire

more strength. The people of this creed have a place where the waters of the River Ganges flow together. There stands a huge tree widespread (*pahn baz-shuda*). Under it they have fixed something which they call *trisul* ‘trident’. It is made of iron and like a stake driven into (the soil), raising above the level of the river several tens of cubits (*chand dah rash*). It is hard as the hardest wood. Its top forms three branches, each long, hard, sharpened, and neatly polished, so that it shines like fire. A man sits by the course of the river (*az gudhara-yi ab*), close to the tree, reading a book and addressing the River Ganges: “O (ya?) great one, either return, or (show) the road of Paradise! Thou art a stream coming from the center of Paradise and showing to the men the road thereunto (*bad-u hami rah numa'i*). Blessed is he who climbs on to the tree and throws himself on that stake.” And the people there listen to it, and one of them climbs on to the tree, flings himself on to the stake, cuts himself to pieces on its blades, and falls into the river. And the people who are there pray for him and say: “he is gone to Paradise”.

7. On the banks of rivers, Gardizi⁶¹

There is a sect [lacuna] whose habit is to assemble daily on the spot where the Ganges unites (*grid shaved*) with the Yamuna (*Jaun*). Each brings a weapon as sharp as a sword, a dagger, or such like. One of these devotees who wishes to purify himself and seeks approach to God, comes near those people and they throw upon him whatever they have of garments, ornaments, golden necklaces, bracelets, and such like, and they set upon him with all their sharp weapons, slay him and cut him in two: they throw one part into the Ganges and the other into the Yamuna saying: “let these two streams take him to Paradise.”

8. Next world revealed to Hindu ascetics, al-Shahrastani⁶²

[Hindu ascetics separate imagination from their physical environment and achieve considerable self-subjugation] so that when meditation becomes emancipated from this world, the next world is revealed to it.

9. Self-immolation practices, Benjamin of Tudela⁶³

Some of the great of this country take a vow to burn themselves alive; and if any such devotee declares to his children and kindred his intention to do so, they all applaud him and say: ‘Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.’... Whenever the appointed day arrives, they prepare a sumptuous feast, mount the devotee upon his horse if he be rich, or lead him afoot if he be poor, to the brink of the ditch. He throws himself into the fire, and all his kindred manifest their joy by the playing of instruments until he is entirely consumed. Within three days of this ceremony two of their principal priests

repair to his house and thus address his children: 'Prepare the house, for today you will be visited by your father who will manifest his wishes unto you.' Witnesses are selected among the inhabitants of the town, and the devil appears in the image of the dead. The wife and children inquire after his state in the other world, and he answers: 'I have met my companions, but they have not admitted me into their company before I have discharged my debts to my friends and neighbours.' He then makes a will, divides his goods among his children, and commands them to discharge all debts he owes and to receive what people owe him; this will is written down by the witnesses...and he is not seen anymore. In the consequence of these lies and deceit, which the priests pass off as magic, they retain a stronghold upon the people, and make them believe that their equal is not to be met with upon earth.

10. Devoted to religious life, Marco Polo⁶⁴

Amongst the natives of this region there is a class peculiarly devoted to a religious life, who are named *tingui*, and who in honour of their divinities lead most austere lives. They go perfectly naked, not concealing any part of their bodies, and say there can be no shame in that state of nudity in which they came into the world; and with respect to what are called the parts of shame, they observe that, not being with them the organs of sin, they have no reason to blush at their exposure. They pay adoration to the ox, and carry a small figure of one, of gilt brass or other metal, attached to their foreheads. They also burn the bones of oxen, reduce them to powder, and with this make an unguent for the purpose of marking various parts of the body, which they do in a reverential manner. If they meet a person with whom they are upon cordial terms, they smear the centre of his forehead with some of these prepared ashes. They do not deprive any creature of life, not even a fly, a flea, or a louse, believing them to be animated with souls; and to feed upon any animal they would consider as a heinous sin. They even abstain from eating vegetables, herbs, or roots, until they have become dry; holding the opinion that these also have souls. They make no use of spoons nor of platters, but spread their victuals upon the dried leaves of the Adam's apple, called like-wise apples of paradise. When they have occasion to ease nature, they go to the sea-beach, and having dropped their burden in the sand, immediately scatter it in all directions, to prevent its giving birth to vermin, whose consequent death by hunger would load their consciences with a grievous offence. They live to great age, some of them even to a hundred and fifty years, enjoying health and vigour, although they sleep upon the bare earth. This must be attributed to their temperance and chastity. When they die, their bodies are burned, in order for the same reason that they might not breed worms.

11. Yogis at Narwar, Gwalior, Ibn Battuta⁶⁵

The men of this class do some marvellous things. One of them will spend months without eating or drinking, and many of them have holes dug for them in the earth which are then built in on top of them, leaving only a space for air to enter. They stay in these for months, and I heard tell of one of them who remained thus for a year. The people say that they make up pills, one of which they take for a given number of days or months, and during that time they require no food or drink. They can tell what is happening at a distance. The sultan holds them in esteem and admits them to his company. Some eat nothing but vegetables, and others, the majority, eat no meat; it is obvious that they have so disciplined themselves in ascetic practices that they have no need of any of the goods or vanities of this world.

12. Yogis with the Sultan, Ibn Battuta⁶⁶

The sultan sent for me once when I was at Delhi, and on entering I found him in a private apartment with some of his intimates and two of these *jugis*. One of them squatted on the ground, then rose into the air above our heads, still sitting. I was so astonished and frightened that I fell to the floor in a faint. A potion was administered to me, and I revived and sat up. Meantime this man remained in his sitting posture. His companion then took a sandal from a bag he had with him, and beat it on the ground like one infuriated. The sandal rose in the air until it came above the neck of the sitting man and then began hitting him on the neck while he descended little by little until he sat down alongside us. Then the sultan said, "If I did not fear for your reason I would have ordered them to do still stranger things than this you have seen." I took my leave but was affected with palpitation and fell ill, until he ordered me to be given a draught which removed it all.

13. Ascetics, Yefrosin, the fifteenth century writer⁶⁷

[They have] neither iron nor temples, nor gold, nor wine, they eat no meat, have no ruler, no buying, they live naked, eat a few vegetables, drink sweet water, ardently believe in God and pray continuously.

H. ON BUDDHISM

1. Some Chinese inscriptions at Bodhgaya⁶⁸

(a) The inscription of the monk Che-Yi, circa A.D. 990

The monk Che-yi of the great Han country had first taken the vow to exhort three hundred thousand men to practise the conduct which assures a

higher birth; to make a charity of three hundred thousand copies of *Shan Shen King* (Sutra relating to the higher birth) and to recite it himself three hundred thousand times. Such a merit, as mentioned above, conduces to the birth in the inner Tusita (heaven).

Now, arriving in Magadha, he has admired the Vajrasana and has humbly met the abbot of Vijnanamatra (School). Kui-pao and a group of venerable monks had together taken the vow to go to be born in Tusita (heaven). Amongst the three hundred thousand persons Kui-pao is the first, Che-yi is the second, Kuang-fong the third and the others mentioned in order are Hui-yen, Ch'ong-ta, Ts'iuan-ts'un, Yuan-chen, Yi-sien, Hui-siu, Che-yong, Fong-sheng. Ts'ing-yun, etc. They have together desired to pay homage to Maitreya, the compassionate and the honoured one, and have now engraved the images of seven Buddhas which they place on record.

(b) The inscription of the monk K'o-Yun, dated A.D. 1022

Memoir on the bodies (kaya) and the thrones of Buddha by monk, K'o-yun, a transmitter of the Sutras and teacher of the Sastras, a native of Si-ho of the great Song Empire.

K'o-yun left the Imperial territory and came to contemplate on the country of Buddha. When he saw the marvellous traces and the holy vestiges how could he help not becoming a respectful panegyrist of the gladdening excellence (of the Buddha)? K'o-yun exhausted all his remaining resources and at thirty steps to the north of the Bodhi tree he set up a beautiful stupa in stone of the 1000 Buddhas. He erected a lasting monument on the spot where (the Maitreya Buddha) will take three steps. Although the height of his capacities was not enough to express his sentiments by writing, the benign work of the Law surpassed his respect to such an extent as to impose itself on his inner self. He tried to compose some lines in an undignified language to celebrate the unborn...

The Emperor of the Great Song dynasty humbly wished that his destiny should be like the water of the celestial lake which is abundant and which neither diminishes nor increases, that his prosperity should be like the celestial peak of the mountain which is high and which always remains high and majestic. My sovereign desired also that in future in this country there should be somebody to occupy continuously the place of Sankha – that in other regions there would be in the future generations a fame like that of Candrachattra – that if henceforth anyone composes a eulogy of the marvellous traces and the holy vestiges, he should take care to write it and make a memoir of it.

Recorded in the month *yi-se*, of the year *jen-siu* of the period *t'ien-hi* (A.D. 1022) of the great Song dynasty.

(c) The inscription of the monk Yi-Ts'ing dated A.D. 1022

The monk Yits'ing and the disciple of the master Yi-lin of the Dhyana court of the prosperous religion in the eastern capital of the great Song Empire acquit themselves of the charge of offering a kasaya, woven with golden threads, offered as a token of gratitude for the four acts of kindness and three indulgences. After having spread it and hung it on the throne of Buddha in India they set up a stupa in stone. The 4th day of the 4th month of the 6th year *t'ien-hi* (A.D. 1022) the Upadhyaya Pien-cheng being, the great master (of the ceremony).

(d) The inscription of Huai-Wen, dated A.D. 1033

The erection of a stupa, in honour of the Emperor T'ai-tsung by the Emperor and the Dowager Empress of the great Song dynasty:

Of the great Song dynasty, the Emperor who is of saintly and pacific character, a wise warrior, good and intelligent, pious and virtuous, and the Dowager Empress who is in harmony with the original principle, who honours virtue and good, who has a long life, does good to others and is saintly, have respectfully charged the monk Huai-wen with the task of going to the country of Magadha in order to erect a stupa by the side of the Vajrasana dedicated to T'ai-tsung, the Emperor who was perfectly good, in harmony with reason, divinely meritorious, saintly and virtuous, pacific and warrior, clear-minded and illustrious, endowed with wide intelligence and profoundly pious.

The Emperor T'ai-tsung humbly desired to go up to the abode of the devas, to receive personally from Buddha the account which confirms the scriptures, to attain the residence of the good saints for all times as his place of habitation, so that the worship of Sakra and Brahma might be his great recompense and the majestic and supernatural influence might raise his dynasty for ever to a higher position.

Written on the 19th day of the first month of the 12th year *ming-tao* being marked by the signs, kui-yi (A.D. 1033).

2. A Mon inscription from Prome of the reign of Kyanzittha [1084-1112 A.D.]⁶⁹

Then the king wrote of the grace of the Buddharatna, Dharmmaratna, (and) Sangharatna (upon a leaf of gold with vermilion ink ?), the king sent it to the Coli prince. The Coli prince, with all his array, hearing of the grace of Buddha, the Law, (and) the Church, from King Sri Tribhuwanadityadhammaraja' sending (word of it to him), he cast off his adhesion to false doctrines, (and) he adhered straightaway to the true doctrine...

3. The Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvamin, who visited eastern India in the years 1234-36, on the devastation wrought by the Turks⁷⁰

[Of Vikramasila] there were then no traces left, the Turushka soldiery having razed it to the ground, and thrown the foundation stones into the Ganges. [At Nalanda] there was absolutely no-one to look after them [the damaged viharas], or to make offerings...

4. Rashid al-din on some fundamental commandments of Shâkamuni⁷¹

Concerning that which is allowed and that which is forbidden, he said furthermore: 'Drink no wine, kill no animal for the sake of food and make not your stomach the grave of living creatures; neither kill harmful animals, insects and reptiles, for had they not been hurt in a previous form of existence, they would not do the same in this present existence.'

To the sect of the *Urâvakas* and *Pratyekabuddhas*, he said that they must earn their food by begging; and if then food of animal nature was thrown into their beggar's bowl, they should not enquire as to its origin but should eat all, whatever it might be, to pacify the stomach.

And of the sect of the *Samyaksambuddhas* he said: 'Since ye have attained the power of discrimination between good and evil, ye must yourselves know what to do, what may be eaten, and that animals may not be tortured. But if ye are hungry and are given a dead animal or one that has been put to death, eat it then, but in no case may ye grant permission for animals to be killed.'

5. Description of a miracle in the valley, north of Kabul near the foot of the Indian Caucasus, the Bamiyan Buddhas, Odoric of Pordenone⁷²

Another great and terrible thing I saw. For, as I went through a certain valley which lieth by the River of Delights, I saw therein many dead corpses lying. And I heard also therein sundry kinds of music, but chiefly nakers, which were marvelously played upon. And so great was the noise thereof that very great fear came upon me. Now, this valley is seven or eight miles long; and if any unbeliever enters therein he quitteth it never again, but perisheth incontinently. Yet I hesitated not to go in that I might see once for all what the matter was. And when I had gone in I saw there, as I have said, such numbers of corpses as no one without seeing it could deem credible. And at one side of the valley, in the very rock, I beheld as it were the face of a man very great and terrible, so very terrible indeed that for my exceeding great fear my spirit seemed to die in me. Wherefore I made the sign of the cross, and began continually to repeat Verbum caro factum but I dared not at all to come nigh that face, but kept at seven or eight paces from it. And so I came at length to

the other end of the valley, and there I ascended a hill of sand and looked around me. But nothing could I descry, only I still heard. Those nakers to play which were played so marvelously. And when I got to the top of that hill I found there a great quantity of silver heaped up as it had been fishes' scales, and some of this I put into my bosom. But as I cared nought for it, and was at the same time in fear lest it should be a snare to hinder my escape, I cast it all down again to the ground. And so by God's grace I came forth scathless. Then all the Saracens when they heard of this, showed me great worship, saying that I was a baptized and holy man. But those who had perished in that valley they said belonged to the devil.

I. SELECTION OF LAMA

Among the earliest accounts of Tibet and the selection of the Lama; Pero Tafur took a three and a half year trip to the eastern Mediterranean starting in 1435 and while trying to arrange a passage to India, made contact with Nicolo Conti returning home after 20 years travels in the East. Tafur did not himself visit India but wrote on the basis of what he learned from Conti during 15 days of conversation⁷³

They say that in India there is a very high mountain, very difficult of ascent, so much so that in ancient times those below had no knowledge of those above, and vice-versa; but that a road was made, and even a chain put down so that one could go up or come down. On top of the mountain, there is a great plain, where they sow and reap wheat, and have herds, and there are many fertile gardens with many fruits and many fountains, with all the things necessary to the life of mankind. And on a rock there is a great monastery where those who have the rank of priest are accustomed to send as electors, twelve noble and virtuous old men, in order that they may select the High Priest or Lord, when this position is vacant. This is done in the following manner: The elder sons and daughters are sent there to be brought up, and they marry and have families, and are provided with all the things necessary for life. They are given horses, and arms, bows and arrows, and are taught the art of war and the art of governing people. The electors who are there each day take counsel among themselves and observe the one who seems to them to be the best suited to succeed to the office of High Priest when this position becomes vacant. They already have in mind the one to be chosen, and when the Lord dies, his nobles take him on their stretchers, covered in mourning to the mountain. When the electors see this from their high place, they take the chosen one and give him as High Priest to the nobles and take from them the

body of the deceased, and bury it in their monastery, with all the honour due it. The others go away with their new Lord, and with great feasts and rejoicing, pledge to him their obedience. Certain tribes then come with their gifts, some bringing pearls, other precious stones of great value, and others quantities of gold, depending on what is produced in the land where each lives.



Chapter 7

Varna and Jati

- A. Classes of men
- B. Brahmins
- C. Kshatriyas and Nairs
- D. Vaishyas
- E. Sudras
- F. Doms
- G. Mlecchas
- H. Equality of beings

A. CLASSES OF MEN

1. Castes, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*¹

In every kingdom, the members of the royal family belong to the same one family, and the authority does not go out of it. They have heir appurtenants; similarly, the calligraphists (*abl al-kitabat*) and the physicians belong to particular families, and these professions (*al-sana 'at*) remain exclusively with them.

2. Professions hereditary, Sulaiman²

In all these kingdoms the nobility is considered to form but one family. Power resides in it alone. The princes name their own successors. It is the same with learned men and physicians. They form a distinct caste, and the profession never goes out of the caste.

3. Seven classes of Hindus, Ibn Khurdadba³

There are seven classes of Hindus, viz., 1st, Sabkufria, among whom are men of high caste, and from among whom kings are chosen. The people of the other six classes do the men of this class homage, and them only. 2nd,

Brahma, who totally abstain from wine and fermented liquors. 3rd, Kataria, who drink not more than three cups of wine; the daughters of the class of Brahma are not given in marriage to the sons of this class, but the Brahma take their daughters. 4th, Sudaria, who are by profession husbandmen. The 5th, Baisura, are artificers and domestics. The 6th, Sandalia, who perform menial offices. 7th, Lahud; their women are fond of adorning themselves, and the men are fond of amusements and games of skill. In Hind there are forty-two religious sects; part of them believe in a creator and Prophet (the blessing of God be upon them); part deny the mission of a Prophet, and part are atheists.

4. Varna and jataka, Alberuni⁴

The Hindus call their castes *varna*, i.e. *colours*, and from a genealogical point of view they call them *jataka*, i.e. *births*. These castes are from the very beginning only four.

- I. The highest caste are the Brahmana, of whom the book of the Hindus tell that they were created from the head of Brahman. And as Brahman is only another name for the force called *nature*, and the head is the highest part of the animal body, the Brahmana are the choice part of the whole genus. Therefore the Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.
- II. The next caste are the Kshatriya who were created, as they say, from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. Their degree is not much below that of the Brahmana.
- III. After them follow the Vaisya, who were created from the thigh of Brahman.
- IV. The Sudra, who were created from his feet.

Between the latter two classes there is no very great distance. Much, however, as these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings.

After the Sudra follow the people called *Antyaja*, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession.

There are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker, and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of bird, and the weaver. The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them.

The people called Hadi, Doma (Domba), Candala, and Badhatau (*sic*) are not reckoned amongst any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty

work, like the cleansing of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class, and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact, they are considered like illegitimate children; for according to general opinion they descend from a Sudra father and a Brahmani mother as the children of fornication; therefore they are degraded outcasts.

Different occupations of caste

The Hindus give every single man of the four castes characteristic names, according to their occupations and modes of life. E.g. the Brahmana is in general called by this name as long as he does his work staying at home. When he is busy with the service of one fire, he is called *ishtin*; if he serves three fires, he is called *agnihotrin*; if he besides offers an offering to the fire, he is called *dikshita*. And as it is with the Brahmana, so is it also with the other castes. Of the classes *beneath* the castes, the Hadi are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean. Next follow the Doma, who play on the lute and sing. The still lower classes practise as a trade killing and the inflicting of judicial punishments. The worst of all are the Badhatau, who not only devour the flesh of dead animals, but even of dogs and other beasts...

Moral qualities of Brahmans

Arjuna asked about the nature of the four castes and what must be their moral qualities, whereupon Vasudeva answered:

"The Brahmana must have an ample intellect; a quiet heart, truthful speech, much patience; he must be master of his senses, a lover of justice, of evident purity, always directed upon worship, entirely bent upon religion..."

Hindus differ among themselves as to which of these is capable of attaining to liberation; for, according to some, only the Brahmana and Kshatriya are capable of it, since the others cannot learn the Veda, whilst according to the Hindu philosophers, liberation is common to all castes and to the whole human race, if their intention of obtaining it is perfect. This view is based on the saying of Vyasa: "Learn to know the twenty-five things thoroughly. Then you may follow whatever religion you like; you will no doubt be liberated." This view is also based on the fact that Vasudeva was a descendant of a Sudra family and also on the following saying of his, which he addressed to Arjuna: "God distributes recompense without injustice and without partiality. He reckons the good as bad if people in doing good forget him; he reckons the bad as good if people in doing bad remember him and do not forget him, whether those people be Vaisya or Sudra or women. How much more will this be the case when they are Brahmana or Kshatriya."

5. Seven classes, Gardizi⁵

ABU 'ABDALLAH JAYHANI says in his book of history (*Kiytab-I-tavarik*) that there are seven classes (*guruh*) of them. (a) The first is called Sakb.tri; this class is the greatest among them and all the Indian tribes prostrate themselves before (its members), while the latter do not do so before anyone. Kingdom (kingship?) belongs to them and they are few. (b) The Brahmans...) but they are not kings. They...prostrate themselves before the S.mnani (*sic*) but the S.mnan do not do so before them. Most of these Brahmins drink no wine and eat no meat. (c) The third are the Kshatriya (spelt *K.shiriyān*) who do not drink wine more than thrice (at a time). (d) The fourth are the *Shudra* (spelt *Sudhriyan*). They are agriculturists and gardeners (*palizban*). They associate with the Kshatriya, from who they take women and do to whom they given theirs (but the Brahmins) do not give them women...(f) The sixth are the Chandala who are singers and also carry out punishments. They have beautiful women. If a Brahman falls in love with such a woman, the keepers of religion expel him and consider him no more a Brahman. For this reason he who touches a Chandala becomes subject to harm. These Chandala go about with a piece (of wood) in their hands; at the end of that piece of wood there is a ring and within it smaller rings are fitted, and with this piece of wood they give warning that men, on seeing that sign and on hearing the sound of the rings, should get out of their way and no harm befall them. (g) (The seventh) are the class called Dunbi (spelt *Rubnan*) who are black-skinned. They are all players on stringed instruments and dancers (*pay-kub*). They are altogether like the Chandala. The latter mix with them and take women from them but do not give them theirs.

6. Great number of classes at Calicut, Abder Razzak⁶

The Infidels are divided into a great number of classes, such as the Bramins, the Djoghis [yogis], and others. Although they are all agreed upon the fundamental principle of polytheism and idolatry, each sect has its peculiar customs. Amongst them there is a class of men, with whom it is the practice for one woman to have a great number of husbands, each of whom undertakes a special duty and fulfils it. The hours of the day and of the night are divided between them; each of them for a certain period takes up his abode in the house, and while he remains there no other is allowed to enter. The *Sameri* [the Zamorin] belongs to this sect.

7. Five classes at Cochin, Ma Huan⁷

There are five classes of men in this kingdom. The Nairs rank with the king. In the first class are those who shave their heads, and have a thread or string hanging over the shoulder, these are looked upon as belonging to the

noblest families [Brahmins]. In the second are the Muhammadans; in the third the Chittis, who are the capitalists; in the fourth the Kolings, who act as commission agents; in the fifth the Mukuas, who are the lowest and poorest of all. The Mukuas live in houses which are forbidden by the Government to be more than three feet high, and they are not allowed to wear long garments; when abroad, if they happen to meet a Nair or a Chitti they at once prostrate themselves on the ground and dare not rise until they have passed by; these Mukuas get their living by fishing and carrying burdens.

B. BRAHMINS

1. Brahmin temples and merchants encountered by the Chinese priest Kien-tchen [A.D. 742-54] on a visit from China to Japan as described by his disciple⁸

There were also three monasteries of Po-lo-men (Brahmans) where Brahmins were residing. The tanks in these monasteries contained blue lotuses, particularly beautiful, of which the flowers, leaves and roots were perfumed.

On the river (of Kouang-tong) (Canton) there were merchantmen belonging to the Po-lo-men (Brahmans of India), the Po-sseu (Persians), the K'ouen-louen (Malays), and others besides, of which it is difficult to determine the number. They are all laden with incense, herbs, jewels and other precious products. The merchandise was piled up in heaps. These ships were 60 to 70 feet deep.

2. On references to Rahmans [Brahmins in medieval Russian works]⁹

- (a) Among the Christians in Galicia there were sayings like
We fast like the Rahmans.
- (b) In the Ukraine language, 'rahman' came to mean a righteous Christian and in the Kaluga and Smolensk region, the adjective 'rahmany' meant ...meek, simple-hearted, strange.
- (c) [The Rahmans are not] burdened by sins, but live quietly close to the angels and bliss is sent upon them from God. [They are called] naked sages, because they have rid themselves of all passions.

3. Brahmins – the devotees of India, Ibn Khurradadhbih¹⁰

They are the devotees of India. They dress in leopard-skins or skins of other (animals). Sometimes it so happens that one of them stands up with a staff in his hand and people gather round him; thus he keeps standing for a whole day until evening, giving a sermon to the people; reminding them of Almighty God and describing to them the affairs of all the peoples that have

perished in the past...They worship idols believing in them as mediators between themselves and Almighty God.

4. Brahmins of Kanauj particularly talented, Abu Zaidu-l Hasan of Sira¹¹

Among the Indians there are men who are devoted to religion and men of science, whom they call Brahmans. They have also their poets who live at the courts of their kings, astronomers, philosophers, diviners, and those who draw omens from the flight of crows, etc. Among them are diviners and jugglers, who perform most astonishing feats. These observations are especially applicable to Kanauj, a large country forming the empire of Jurz.

5. Most noble and illustrious, Al Masudi¹²

The Indians gave themselves a king, Brahma the Great, who reigned 366 years, and in whose times the book Sindhind [Siddhanta] and Arjabahad [Aryabhatta] were composed. His descendants have retained to our days the name Brahmans. They are honoured by Indians as forming the most noble and illustrious caste. They do not eat the flesh of any animal, and both men and women wear yellow threads suspended round their necks, like a baldric, to distinguish them from the other castes of India.

6. Obligations of Brahmans, Alberuni¹³

The life of the Brahman, after seven years of it have passed, is divided into four parts. The first part begins with the eighth year, when the Brahmans come to him to instruct him, to teach him his duties, and to enjoin him to adhere to them and to embrace them as long as he lives. Then they bind a girdle round his waist and invest him with a pair of *yajnopavitas*, i.e. one strong cord consisting of nine single cords which are twisted together, and with a third *yajnopavita*, a single one made from cloth. This girdle runs from the left shoulder to the right hip. Further, he is presented with a stick which he has to wear, and with a seal-ring of a certain grass, called *darbha*, which he wears on the ring-finger of the right hand. This seal-ring is also called *pavitra*. The object of his wearing the ring on the ring-finger of his right hand is this, that it should be a good omen and a blessing for all those who receive gifts from that hand. The obligation of wearing the ring is not quite so stringent as that of wearing the *yajnopavita*, for from the latter he is not to separate himself under any circumstances whatever. If he takes it off while eating or fulfilling some want of nature, he thereby commits a sin which cannot be wiped off save by some work of expiation, fasting, or almsgiving.

This first period

This first period of the Brahman's life extends till the twenty-fifth year of his age, or, according to the *Vishnu-Purana*, till his forty-eighth year. His duty is to practise abstinence, to make the earth his bed, to begin with the learning of the Veda and of its explanation, of the science of theology and law, all this being taught to him by a master whom he serves day and night. He washes himself thrice a day, and performs a sacrifice to the fire both at the beginning and end of the day. After the sacrifice he worships his master. He fasts a day and he breaks fast a day, but he is never allowed to eat meat. He dwells in the house of the master, which he only leaves in order to ask for a gift and to beg in not more than five houses once a day, either at noon or in the evening. Whatever alms he receives he places before his master to choose from it what he likes. Then the master allows him to take the remainder. Thus the pupil nourishes himself from the remains of the dishes of his master. Further, he fetches the wood for the fire, wood of two kinds of trees, *palasa* (*Butea frondosa*) and *darbha*, in order to perform the sacrifice; for the Hindus highly venerate the fire, and offer flowers to it. It is the same case with all other nations. They always thought that the sacrifice was accepted by the deity if the fire came down upon it, and no other worship has been able to draw them away from it, neither the worship of idols nor that of stars, cows, asses, or images. Therefore Bashshar Ibn Burd says: "Since there is fire, it is worshipped."

The second period

The second period of their life extends from the twenty-fifth year till the fiftieth, or, according to the *Vishnu-Purana* till the seventieth. The master allows him to marry. He marries, establishes a household, and intends to have descendants, but he cohabits with his wife only once in a month after she has become clean of the menstruation. He is not allowed to marry a woman above twelve years of age. He gains his sustenance *either* by the fee he obtains for teaching Brahmans and Kshatriyas, not as a payment, but as a present, *or* by presents which he receives from some one because he performs for him the sacrifices to the fire, *or* by asking a gift from the kings and nobles, there being no importunate pressing on his part, and no unwillingness on the part of the giver. There is always a Brahman in the houses of these people, who there administers the affairs of religion and the works of piety. He is called *purohita*. Lastly, the Brahman lives from what he gathers on the earth or from the trees. He may try his fortune in the trade of clothes and betel-nuts, but it is preferable that he should not trade himself, and that a Vaisya should do the business for him, because originally trade is forbidden on account of the deceiving and lying which are mixed up with it. Trading is permitted to him only in case of dire necessity, when he has no other means of sustenance. The Brahmans are

not, like the other castes, bound to pay taxes and to perform services to the kings. Further, he is not allowed continually to busy himself with horses and cows, with the care for the cattle, nor with gaining by usury. The blue colour is impure for him, so that if it touches his body, he is obliged to wash himself. Lastly, he must always beat the drum before the fire, and recite for it the prescribed holy texts.

The third period

The third period of the life of the Brahman extends from the fiftieth year to the seventy-fifth, or, according to the *Vishnu Purana*, till the ninetieth. He practises abstinence, leaves his household, and hands it as well as his wife over to his children, if the latter does not prefer to accompany him into the life in the wilderness. He dwells outside civilisation, and leads the same life again which he led in the first period. He does not take shelter under a roof, nor wear any other dress but some bark of a tree, simply sufficient to cover his loins. He sleeps on the earth without any bed, and only nourishes himself by fruit, vegetables, and roots. He lets the hair grow long and does not anoint himself with oil.

The fourth period

The fourth period extends till the end of life. He wears a red garment and holds a stick in his hand. He is always given to meditation; he strips the mind of friendship and enmity, and roots out desire, and lust, and wrath. He does not converse with anybody at all. When walking to a place of a particular merit, in order to gain a heavenly reward, he does not stop on the road in a village longer than a day, nor in a city longer than five days. If anyone gives him something, he does not leave a remainder of it for the following day. He has no other business but that of caring for the path which leads to salvation, and for reaching *moksha*, whence there is no return to this world.

The universal duties of the Brahman throughout his whole life are works of piety, giving alms and receiving them. For that which the Brahmins give reverts to the *pitaras* (is in reality a benefit to the *Fathers*). He must continually read, perform the sacrifices, take care of the fire which he lights, offer before it, worship it, and preserve it from being extinguished, that he may be burned by it after his death. It is called *homa*.

Every day he must wash himself thrice: at the *samdhi* of rising, i.e. morning dawn, at the *samdhi* of setting, i.e. evening twilight, and between them in the middle of the day. The first washing is on account of sleep, because the openings of the body have become lax during it. Washing is a cleansing from accidental impurity and a preparation for prayer.

Prayers

Their prayer consists of praise, glorification, and prostration according to their peculiar manner, viz. prostrating themselves on the two thumbs, whilst the two palms of the hands are joined, and they turn their faces towards the sun. For the sun is their *kibla*, wherever he may be, except when in the south. For they do not perform any work of piety with the face turned southward; only when occupied with something evil and unlucky they turn themselves towards the south.

The time when the sun declines from the meridian (the afternoon) is well suited for acquiring in it a heavenly reward. Therefore at this time the Brahman must be clean.

The evening is the time of supper and of prayer. The Brahman may take his supper and pray without having previously washed himself. Therefore, evidently, the rule as to the third washing is not as stringent as that relating to the first and second washings.

A nightly washing is obligatory for the Brahman only at the times of eclipses, that he should be prepared to perform the rules and sacrifices prescribed for that occasion.

The Brahman, as long as he lives, eats only twice a day, at noon and at nightfall; and when he wants to take his meal, he begins by putting aside as much as is sufficient for one or two men as alms, especially for strange Brahmans who happen to come at evening time asking for something. To neglect *their* maintenance would be a great sin. Further, he puts something aside for the cattle, the birds, and the fire. Over the remainder he says prayers and eats it. The remainder of his dish he places outside his house, and does not any more come near it, as it is no longer allowable for him, being destined for the chance passerby who wants it, be he a man, bird, dog, or something else.

The Brahman must have a water-vessel for himself. If another one uses it, it is broken. The same remark applies to his eating-instruments. I have seen Brahmans who allowed their relatives to eat with them from the same plate, but most of them disapprove of this.

He is obliged to dwell between the river Sindh in the north and the river Carmanvati in the south. He is not allowed to cross either of these frontiers so as to enter the country of the Turks or of the Karnata. Further, he must live between the ocean in the east and west. People say that he is not allowed to stay in a country in which the grass which he wears on the ring-finger does not grow, nor the black-haired gazelles graze. This is a description for the whole country within the just-mentioned boundaries. If he passes beyond them he commits a sin.

In a country where not the whole spot in the house which is prepared for

people to eat upon it is plastered with clay, where they, on the contrary, prepare a separate tablecloth for each person eating by pouring water over a spot and plastering it with the dung of cows, the shape of the Brahman's tablecloth must be square. Those who have the custom of preparing such tablecloths give the following as the cause of this custom – The spot of eating is soiled by the eating. If the eating is finished, the spot is washed and plastered to become clean again. If, now, the soiled spot is not distinguished by a separate mark, you would suppose also the other spots to be soiled, since they are similar to and cannot be distinguished from each other.

Five vegetables are forbidden to them by the religious code:-Onions, garlic, a kind of gourd, the root of a plant like the carrots called *krncn* (?), and another vegetable which grows round their tanks called *nali*.

7. A religious class, Al-Idrisi¹⁴

...the Brahmans...are the religious class. They dress in the skins of tigers and other animals. Sometimes one of them, taking a staff in his hand, will assemble a crowd around him, and will stand from morn-till eve-speaking to his auditors of the glory and power of God, and explaining to them the events which brought destruction upon the ancient people, that is, upon the Brahmans. They never drink wine nor fermented liquors. They worship idols (whom they consider to be) able to intercede with the Most High.

8. "Have the leadership under the king," Marvazi, the Sicilian geographer of the court of the Norman king, Roger II¹⁵

The Brahmans have the leadership under the king. They prostrate themselves before the Sumani, but the latter do not do so before them. Some of those who belong to this caste do not drink wine or intoxicating drinks.

9. Brahmins [Vaishyas?] in the province of Lac, Loac, or Lar [Gujarat], Marco Polo¹⁶

Leaving the place where rests the body of the glorious apostle Saint Thomas, and proceeding westward, you enter the province of Lar, from whence the Bramins, who are spread over India, derive their origin. These are the best and most honourable merchants that can be found. No consideration whatever can induce them to speak an untruth, even though their lives should depend upon it. They have also an abhorrence of robbery or of purloining the goods of other persons. They are likewise remarkable for the virtue of continence, being satisfied with the possession of one wife. When any foreign merchant, unacquainted with the usages of the country, introduces himself to one of these, and commits to his hands the care of his adventure, this Bramin undertakes the management of it, disposes of the goods, and renders a faithful account of

the proceeds, attending scrupulously to the interests of the stranger, and not demanding any recompense for his trouble, should the owner uncourteously omit to make him the gratuitous offer. They eat meat, and drink the wine of the country. They do not, however, kill any animal themselves, but get it done by the Mahometans. The Bramins are distinguished by a certain badge, consisting of a thick cotton thread, which passes over the shoulder and is tied under the arm, in such a manner that the thread appears upon the breast and behind the back.

10. Priests at Cambay, Nicolo Conti¹⁷

There are priests here who are called bachali, who only marry one wife. The wife is, by law, burnt with the body of her husband. These priests do not eat any animal food, but live upon rice, milk, and vegetables.

11. Abstain from all animal food, Nicolo Conti¹⁸

Their priests, the Bachali, abstain from all animal food, particularly the ox, which they consider it a great crime to kill or to eat, as being of all the most useful to man: the Indians use the ox as a beast of burthen. These priests live upon rice, herbs, fruit, and vegetables: they have only one wife, who is burnt with her dead husband. Lying by the side of the corpse, with her arm under its neck, she submits herself the flames, without giving way to any expression of pain.

12. "Of superior cultivation," Nicolo Conti¹⁹

There is a class of philosophers found throughout all India, called Brahmins, who devote themselves much to astronomy and the prediction of future events. They are men of superior cultivation, and are distinguished by a greater sanctity of life and manners. Nicolo asserts that he saw among them one who was three hundred years old, an instance of longevity which they regard as miraculous; so much so, that wherever he went he was followed by the children. An art which they call geomantia, is practised by many of them, by means of which they frequently predict future events with as much accuracy as though they were present. They also make use of incantations, by means of which they are frequently able to excite tempests and also to allay them. On this account many eat in secret, fearing lest they should be fascinated by the eyes of lookers on.

- 13. In a story from the *Libro de los ejemplos por A.B.C.*, the author illustrates the virtues of abstinence and simple living by quoting a letter which the *Bragamanos* [a Spanish version of Brahmins] supposedly wrote describing their life²⁰**

...We do not build houses, but live in the caves in the mountains.... We do not covet riches, for the only rich person is the one who is content with what he has...We are not envious because we are all equal...We do not plough nor sow...nor do we seek any food other than that which nature gives us...And because we live moderately we are healthy and do not suffer illness nor require the services of doctors....Since we know how to conquer the enemies from within, which are the fleshly appetites; we have no external enemies....Because of this, we avoid violent and sudden death, and we all live to be very old, awaiting with great desire the blessed life of paradise.

C. KSHATRIYAS

1. Kshatriyas, Alberuni²¹

The Kshatriya reads the Veda and learns it, but does not teach it. He offers to the fire and acts according to the rules of the Puranas. In places where...a tablecloth is prepared for eating, he makes it angular. He rules the people and defends them, for he is created for this task. He girds himself with a single cord of the threefold *yajno-pavita*, and a single other cord of cotton. This takes place after he has finished the twelfth year of his life.

2. Mostly princely families of India, Gardizi²²

This group called RACH.N.RI (Kshatriyas?) are mostly of princely families of India and from the king's party (*shia* for *shifta*). Their religion is to serve the kings and to help them in any case. They say "we do not weary ourselves without a profit or some necessity (*bi-naf i ya daf i*). The best thing is to serve the kings and attend on them in struggling against their enemies. Should we gain victory, our rank (*miqdar?*) in the king's service will increase and our glory rise, and we shall obtain the best things in the world. If, however, we die in our endeavours we shall go to Paradise with all its blessings." These people are mainly, courageous, and valiant. They have deadly swords and are very impatient (*shakt na-sabur*) to sacrifice their life.

D. VAISHYAS

1. Vaishyas practice agriculture, Alberuni²³

It is the duty of the Vaisya to practise agriculture and to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to remove the needs of the Brahmans. He is only allowed to gird himself with a single *yajnopavita*, which is made of two cords.

2. A Hindu merchant of Nahrwala, Muhammad U'fi²⁴

In the city or Nahrwala there lived a Hindu merchant who having deposited nine lacs of Balotras in the hands of a certain person, after some time died. The trustee then sent for the merchant's son and said: Your father left with me nine lacs of Balotras. The son replied that he knew nothing about it, but that there would probably be mention made of the transaction in his father's accounts. These he sent for but could find nothing about nine lacs! on this he observed: "Had my father entrusted anybody with so large a sum, surely mention would have been made of it in his account book; this not being the case, I cannot feel myself justified in taking possession of the money." The trustee urged the youth to take the money, but he still refused, and the contention grew hot between them. At last they agreed to refer the matter to the arbitration of Rai Jai Sing Deo, who gave it as his opinion, that since the two could not agree as to the disposal of the money, it was advisable that it should be expended on some work of lasting utility, so that the real owner would reap the reward of virtue and charity. Accordingly the 'nine-lack reservoir', the finest in the world, hitherto unsurpassed by all that the cleverest and wisest have executed or imagined, was built; and remains to be seen to this day.

E. SUDRAS

1. The Sudra, Alberuni²⁵

The Sudra is like a servant to the Brahman, taking care of his affairs and serving him. If, though being poor in the extreme, he still desires not to be without a *yajnopavita*, he girds himself only with the linen one...

Every man who takes to some occupation which is not allowed to his caste, as, e.g. a Brahman to trade, a Sudra to agriculture, commits a sin or crime, which they consider only a little less than the crime of theft...

2. Labourers and agriculturists, Al-Idrisi²⁶

Next comes the Sharduya, who are labourers and agriculturists; then the Basya, who are artizans and mechanics; then the Sabdaliya (or Sandaliya),

who are singers, and whose women are noted for their beauty; and, lastly, the Zakya, who are jugglers, tumblers, and players of various instruments.

F. DOMS

Have to do drudgeries, Friar Jordanus²⁷

There be also certain others which be called *Dumbri* who eat carrion and carcasses; who have absolutely no object of worship: and who have to do the drudgeries of other people, and carry loads.

G. MLECCHAS

Non-Hindus called *mleccha*, Alberuni²⁸

All other men except the Candala, as far as they are not Hindus, are called *mleccha*, *i.e.* unclean, all those who kill men and slaughter animals and eat the flesh of cows.

H. ALL BEINGS EQUAL

Vasudeva says they appear different only to the ignorant, Alberuni²⁹

All these things originate in the difference of the classes or castes, one set of people treating the others as fools. This apart, all men are equal to each other, as Vasudeva says regarding him who seeks salvation: "In the judgement of the intelligent man, the Brahman and the Candala are equal, the friend and the foe, the faithful and the deceitful, nay, even the serpent and the weasel. If to the eyes of intelligence all things are equal, to ignorance they appear as separated and different."

End-notes

1. **The Russian religious verse, *Dove-Book*, on the origins of man bears a marked resemblance to the *Purusha Sukta* of the Rig Veda, Bongard-Levin, p., 17**

The rulers in our world came from the sacred head of Adam; the princely boyars from the sacred body of Adam; orthodox peasants from the sacred feet of Adam.



Chapter 8

Women

- A. Some Observations
- B. Marriage
- C. Sati
- D. Devadasis
- E. House of Prostitution

A. SOME OBSERVATIONS

1. Royal women not veiled, Abu Zaidu-l Hasan, of Sira¹

Most of the princes of India, when they hold a court, allow their women to be seen by the men who attend it, whether they be natives or foreigners. No veil conceals them from the eyes of the visitor.

2. Women at Calicut, A Journal of The First Voyage of Vasco Da Gama²

The women of this country, as a rule, are ugly and of small stature. They wear many jewels of gold round the neck, numerous bracelets on their arms, and rings set with precious stones on their toes. All these people are well disposed and apparently of mild temper. At first sight they seem covetous and ignorant.

B. MARRIAGE

1. Matrimonial alliances determine descent, Alberuni³

...in former times there were three modes of determining descent or relationship:

1. The child born to a man by his legitimate wife is the child of the father, as is the custom with us and with the Hindus.
2. If a man marries a woman and has a child by her; if, further, the

marriage-contract stipulates that the children of the woman will belong to *her* father, the child is considered as the child of its grandfather who made that stipulation, and not as the child of its father who engendered it.

3. If a stranger has a child by a married woman, the child belongs to her husband, since the wife being, as it were, the soil in which the child has grown, is the property of the husband, always presupposing that the sowing, *i.e.* the cohabitation, takes place with his consent...

The four sons of Pandu had one wife in common, who stayed one month with each of them alternately. In the books of the Hindus it is told that Parasara, the hermit, one day travelled in a boat in which there was also a daughter of the boatman. He fell in love with her, tried to seduce her, and finally she yielded; but there was nothing on the bank of the river to hide them from the looks of the people. However, instantaneously there grew a tamarisk-tree to facilitate their purpose. Now he cohabited with her behind the tamarisk, and made her conceive, whereupon she became pregnant with this his excellent son Vyasa.

All these customs have now been abolished and abrogated, and therefore we may infer from their tradition that in principle *the abrogation of a law is allowable*.

2. Marriage customs, Alberuni⁴

Every nation has particular customs of marriage, especially those who claim to have a religion and law of divine origin. The Hindus marry at a very young age; therefore the parents arrange the marriage for their sons. On that occasion the Brahmans perform the rites of the sacrifices, and they as well as others receive alms. The implements of the wedding rejoicings are brought forward. No gift is settled between them. The man gives only a present to the wife, as he thinks fit, and a marriage gift in advance, which he has no right to claim back, but the wife may give it back to him of her own will. Husband and wife can only be separated by death, as they have no divorce.

3. Marriage in Coromandel, Chau Ju-Kua⁵

When contracting marriage, they send, in the first place, a female go-between with a gold (or) silver finger-ring to the girl's home. Three days afterwards there is a meeting of the man's family to decide upon the amount of land, cotton, betel nuts, wine and the like to be given as marriage portion.

The girl's family sends in return (a?) gold or silver finger-ring, *yue-no* [probably a kind of muslin] cloth and brocaded clothing to be worn by the bride to the (intended) son-in-law. Should the man wish to withdraw from the engagement, he would not dare reclaim the marriage gifts; if the girl should wish to reject the man she must pay back double.

4. Marriages in Chola country, Ma Twan-lin⁶

For marriages, the suitor sends at first a mediatrix to the family of the young girl, whom he courts, offering her a ring of gold or silver. Three days after, the relatives of the young man, join and consult together to determine if they could, according to their resources, give to the new household some fields, domestic animals, or only palm wine and some areca nuts and so on. From their side, the future relations send to the fiance some gold or silver rings; some pieces of cloth; and some beautiful clothes for his wife. These preliminaries ended, if the young man refuses to marry the young girl, he should sent back the tokens of betrothal that he has received, and if it is the young girl who wishes to retract, she ought to restore twice the presents she has accepted.

5. Marriages celebrated with much singing and feasting, Nicolo Conti⁷

Their weddings are celebrated with singing, feasting, and the sound of trumpets and flutes, for, with the exception of organs, all the other instruments in use among them for singing and playing are similar to our own. They make sumptuous feasts both day and night, at which there is both singing and instrumental music. Some sing, dancing in a circle, after our manner; while others sing forming a line in single file, one after the other, and exchanging little painted rods, of which each person carries two, with those whom they meet on turning ['kolata', an old folk dance of the south]; the effect of which he describes as being extremely pretty.

6. Women allowed many husbands in Calicut, Nicolo Conti⁸

In this district alone the women are allowed to take several husbands, so that some have ten and more. The husbands contribute amongst themselves to the maintenance of the wife, who lives apart from her husbands. When one visits her he leaves a mark at the door of the house, which being seen by another coming afterwards, he goes away without entering. The children are allotted to the husbands at the will of the wife. The inheritance of the father does not descend to the children, but to the grandchildren.

7. Customs at Calicut, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano⁹

Every lady may take to herself seven or eight husbands, according to her inclination. The men never marry any woman who is a virgin; but if one, being a virgin, is betrothed, she is delivered over before the nuptials to some other person for fifteen or twenty days in order that she may be deflowered.

C. SATI

1. Widows and sati, Alberuni¹⁰

If a wife loses her husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose between two things – either to remain a widow as long as she lives or to burn herself; and the latter eventuality is considered the preferable, because as a widow she is ill-treated as long as she lives. As regards the wives of the kings, they are in the habit of burning them, whether they wish it or not, by which they desire to prevent any of them by chance committing something unworthy of the illustrious husband. They make an exception only for women of advanced years and for those who have children; for the son is the responsible protector of his mother.

2. Sati, Odoric of Pordenone¹¹

But the idolaters of this realm have one detestable custom (that I must mention). For when any man dies, they burn him, and if he leave a wife they burn her alive with him, saying that she ought to go and keep her husband company in the other world. But if the women have sons by her husband she may abide with them, an she will. And, on the other hand, if the wife die there is no law to impose the like on him; but he, if he if likes, can take another wife. It is also customary there for the women to drink wine and not the men. The women also have their foreheads shaven, whilst the men shave not the beard.

3. Sati in India the Less, Friar Jordanus¹²

In this India, on the death of a noble, or of any people of substance; their bodies are burned: and eke their wives follow them alive to the fire, and, for the sake of worldly glory, and for the love of their husbands, and for eternal life, burn along with them, with as much joy as if they were going to be wedded; and those who do this have the higher repute for virtue and perfection among the rest. Wonderful! I have sometimes seen for one dead man who was burnt, five living women take their places on the fire with him, and die with their dead.

4. Sati at Ajudahan, Ibn Battuta¹³

Two days later we reached Ajudahan [Pakpattan], a small town belonging to the pious Shaykh Farid ad-Din. As I returned to the camp after visiting this personage, I saw the people hurrying out, and some of our party along with them. I asked them what was happening and they told me that one of the Hindu infidels had died, that a fire had been kindled to burn him, and his wife would burn herself along with him. After the burning my companions came back and

told me that she had embraced the dead man until she herself was burned with him. Later on I used often to see a Hindu woman, richly dressed, riding on horseback, followed by both Muslims and infidels and preceded by drums and trumpets; she was accompanied by Brahmans, who are the chiefs of the Hindus. In the sultan's dominions they ask his permission to burn her, which he accords them. The burning of the wife after her husband's death is regarded by them as a commendable act, but is not compulsory; only when a widow burns herself her family acquires a certain prestige by it and gain a reputation for fidelity. A widow who does not burn herself dresses in coarse garments and lives with her own people in misery, despised for her lack of fidelity, but she is not forced to burn herself.

At Am-jhera

Once in the town of Amjari [Am-jhera, near Dhar] I saw three women whose husbands had been killed in battle and who had agreed to burn themselves. Each one had a horse brought to her and mounted it, richly dressed and perfumed. In her right hand she held a coconut, with which she played, and in her left a mirror, in which she looked at her face. They were surrounded by Brahmans and their own relatives, and were preceded by drums, trumpets and bugles. Everyone of the infidels said to them "Take greetings from me to my father, or brother or mother, or friend" and they would say 'Yes' and smile at them. I rode out with my companions to see the way in which the burning was carried out.

After three miles we came to a dark place with much water and shady trees, amongst which there were four pavilions, each containing a stone idol. Between the pavilions there was a basin of water over which a dense shade was cast by trees so thickly set that the sun could not penetrate them. The place looked like a spot in hell – God preserve us from it! On reaching these pavilions they descended to the pool, plunged into it and divested themselves of their clothes and ornaments, which they distributed as alms. Each one was then given an unsewn garment of coarse cotton and tied part of it round her waist and part over her head and shoulders. The fires had been lit near this basin in a low lying spot, and oil of sesam poured over them, so that the flames were increased. There were about fifteen men there with faggots of thin wood and about ten others with heavy pieces of wood, and the drummers and trumpeters were standing by waiting for the woman's coming. The fire was screened off by a blanket held by some men, so that she should not be frightened by the sight of it. I saw one of them, on coming to the blanket, pull it violently out of the men's hands, saying to them with a smile "Do you frighten me with the fire? I know that it is a fire, so let me alone." Thereupon she joined her hands above her head in salutation to the fire and cast herself into it. At the

same moment the drums, trumpets and bugles were sounded, the men threw their firewood on her and the others put the heavy wood on top of her to prevent her moving, cries were raised and there was a loud clamour. When I saw this I had all but fallen off my horse, if my companions had not quickly brought water to me and laved my face, after which I withdrew.

5. Sati in Cambay, Nicolo Conti¹⁴

It is the custom when husbands die, for one or more of their wives to burn themselves with them, in order to add to the pomp of the funeral. She who was the most dear to the deceased, places herself by his side with her arm round his neck, and burns herself with him; the other wives, when the funeral pile is lighted, cast themselves into the flames.

6. Sati in Central India, Nicolo Conti¹⁵

In central India the dead are burned, and the living wives, for the most part, are consumed in the same funeral pyre with their husband, one or more, according to the agreement at the time the marriage was contracted. The first wife is compelled by the law to be burnt, even though she should be the only wife. But others are married under the express agreement that they should add to the splendour of the funeral ceremony by their death, and this is considered a great honour for them. The deceased husband is laid on a couch, dressed in his best garments. A vast funeral pyre is erected over him in the form of a pyramid, constructed of odoriferous woods. The pile being ignited, the wife, habited in her richest garments, walks gaily around it, singing, accompanied by a great concourse of people, and amid the sounds of trumpets, flutes, and songs. In the meantime one of the priests, called Bachali, standing on some elevated spot, exhorts her to a contempt of life and death, promising her all kinds of enjoyment with her husband, much wealth, and abundance of ornaments. When she has walked round the fire several times, she stands near the elevation on which is the priest, and taking off her dress puts on a white linen garment, her body having first been washed according to custom. In obedience to the exhortation of the priest she then springs into the fire. If some show more timidity (for it frequently happens that they become stupefied by terror at the sight of the struggles of the others, or of their sufferings in the fire), they are thrown into the fire by the bystanders, whether consenting or not. Their ashes are afterwards collected and placed in urns, which form an ornament for the sepulchres.

7. Sati at Coromandel, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano¹⁶

Departing thence after twelve days we reached a port called Coromandel, where the red sandal wood tree grows in such abundance, that they build houses

of it. The lord of this place is an idolater, like the preceding. There is another custom in practice here, that when a man dies and they prepare to burn him, one of his wives burns herself alive with him; and this is their constant habit.

D. DEVADASIS

1. In Gujarat, Chau Ju-kua¹⁷

There are four thousand Buddhist [?] temple buildings, in which live over twenty thousand dancing-girls who sing twice daily while offering food to the Buddha (i.e., the idols) and while offering flowers. When offering flowers they tie them in bunches with cotton thread, of which they use three hundred catties every day.

2. Dedicated to the Gods, Marco Polo¹⁸

In their temples there are many idols, the forms of which represent them of the male and the female sex; and to these, fathers and mothers dedicate their daughters. Having been so dedicated, they are expected to attend whenever the priests of the convent require them to contribute to the gratification of the idol; and on such occasions they repair thither, singing and playing on instruments, and adding by their presence to the festivity. These young women are very numerous, and form large bands. Several times in the week they carry an offering of victuals to the idol to whose service they are devoted, and of this food they say the idol partakes. A table for the purpose is placed before it, and upon this the victuals are suffered to remain for the space of a full hour; during which damsels never cease to sing, and play, and exhibit wanton gestures. This lasts as long as a person of condition would require for making a convenient meal. They then declare that the spirit of the idol is content with its share of the entertainment provided, and, ranging themselves around it, they proceed to eat in their turn; after which they repair to their respective homes.

E. HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION

At Vijayanagar, Abder Razzak¹⁹

Opposite the *darab-khaneh* (the mint) is the house of the Governor, where are stationed twelve thousand soldiers as a guard, who receive every day a payment of twelve thousand *fanom*, levied on the receipts of the houses of prostitution. The magnificence of the places of this kind, the beauty of the young girls collected therein, their allurements, and their coquetry, surpass all

description. I will confine myself to the description of some particulars. Behind the *darab-khaneh* is a sort of bazaar, which is more than three hundred *ghez* in length, and more than twenty in breadth. On two sides are ranged chambers and *estrades*; in front of them are erected, in the form of thrones, several platforms constructed of beautiful stones. On the two sides of the avenue formed by the chambers are represented figures of lions, panthers, tigers, and other animals. All are so well drawn, and their movements have so natural an appearance, that you would think these animals were alive. Immediately after midday prayer they place before the doors of the chambers, which are decorated with extreme magnificence, thrones and chairs, on which the courtezans seat themselves. Each of these women is bedecked with pearls and gems of great value, and is dressed in costly raiment. They are all extremely young, and of perfect beauty. Each one of them has by her two young slaves, who give the signal of pleasure, and have the charge of attending to everything which can contribute to amusement. Any man may enter into this locality, and select any girl that pleases him, and take his pleasure with her. Anything that he carries about with him is delivered into the keeping of these engaged in the service of the houses of prostitution; and if anything is lost, these latter are responsible for it.

Each of the seven fortresses alike contains a great number of places of prostitution, and their general proceeds amount to twelve thousand *fanom*, which forms the pay allotted to the guards. These latter have it assigned to them as a duty to make themselves acquainted with every event which occurs within the fortresses; if any article is lost or stolen by thieves it is their place to report it; if not they are bound to make it good. Some slaves which had been bought by my companions, had run away. Information was given of the circumstance to the governor, who gave orders to the superintendents of the quarter in which we lived to bring back the fugitives or to make good the loss. These guards, on being informed of the value of the slaves, paid up the amount.



Chapter 9

Hindu Rulers

- A. The kings of India
- B. Pulakesin II
- C. Rai Dahir
- D. The Rashtrakutas
- E. Al-Jurz
- F. The Kings of Bengal
- G. The Kingdom of Lakhimpur
- H. The Kingdom of Tafar
- I. The Kingdom of Kashbin
- J. The Kingdom of Kiranj
- K. The Kingdom of Kanauj
- L. The Chola kingdom
- M. The Kingdom of Telingana
- N. The Kingdom of Nairs
- O. The Kingdom of Mabar
- P. Kings of India the Greater
- Q. The Zamorin
- R. The King of Vijayanagar
- S. The King of Cochin
- T. The King of Calicut

A. THE KINGS OF INDIA

1. Richly adorned, Abu Zaidu-l Hasan, of Sira¹

The kings of India are accustomed to wear earrings of precious stones, mounted in gold. They also wear necklaces of great value, formed of the most

precious red and green stones. Pearls, however are held in the highest esteem, and are greatly sought after...

2. Indian kings maintain large armies, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²

The Indian kings possess large armies, but they do not maintain them. Whenever a king calls them to fight, they do so and maintain themselves with their own money; the king has no liability in this regard. But the Chinese pay [money] to them as the Arabs do.

B. PULAKESIN II

The Sassanian monarch, Khusru II, to his sons on an astrological prediction sent by Pulakesin II [as recorded by the Persian historian, Tabari; A.D. 838-923]³

Two years ago, Pulakesi, King of India, sent to us, in the thirty-sixth year of our reign, ambassadors carrying a letter imparting to us various news, and presents for us, for you, and our other sons. He also wrote a letter to each of you. To you he presented – don't you remember it? – an elephant, a sword, a white falcon and a piece of gold brocade. When we looked at the presents and at the letters, we remarked that yours bore the mark 'Private' on the cover in the Indian language. Then we ordered that the presents and other letters should be delivered to each of you, but we kept back your letter, on account of the remark written on the outside. We then sent for an Indian scribe, had the seal broken, and the letter read. The contents were : 'Rejoice and be of good cheer, for on the day Dai ba Adhar, of the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Chosroes thou wilt be crowned king and become ruler of the whole empire. Signed, Pulakesi.' But we closed this letter with our seal, and gave it into the keeping of our consort Shirin.

C. RAI DAHIR

1. Dahir fights Muhammad Kasim, *Chach-Nama*⁴

Historians have related that Dahir was slain at the fort of Rawar at sunset, on Thursday, the 10th of Ramazan, in the year 93 (June, 712 A.D.). Abu-l Hasan relates upon the authority Abu-l Lais Hindi, who heard it from his father, that when the army of Islam made the attack, and most of the infidels were

slain, a noise arose upon the left, and Dahir thought it came from his own forces. He cried out, "Come hither; I am here." The women then raised their voices, and said, "O king, we are your women, who have fallen into the hands of the Arabs, and are captives." Dahir said, "I live as yet, who captured you?" So saying, he urged his elephant against the Musulman army. Muhammad Kasim told the naphtha throwers that the opportunity was theirs, and a powerful man, in obedience to this direction, shot his naphtha arrow into Dahir's howda, and set it on fire. Dahir ordered his elephant driver to turn back, for the elephant was thirsty, and the howda was on fire. The elephant heeded not his driver, but dashed into the water, and in spite of all the efforts of the man, refused to turn back. Dahir and the driver were carried into the rolling waves. Some of the infidels went into the water with them, and some stood upon the banks; but when the Arab horsemen came up, they fled. After the elephant had drunk water, he wanted to return to the fort. The Muhammadan archers plied their weapons, and a rain of arrows fell around. A skilful Bowman aimed an arrow, which struck Dahir in the breast (*bar dil*), and he fell down in the howda upon his face. The elephant then came out of the water and charged. Some of the infidels who remained were trampled under foot, and the others were dispersed. Dahir got off his elephant, and confronted an Arab; but this brave fellow struck him with a sword in the very centre of his head, and cleft it to his neck. The Muhammadans and infidels closed and maintained a deadly fight, until they reached the fort of Rawar. When the Brahmans who had gone into the water found the place of Dahir fall deserted, they came out and hid the body of Dahir under the bank. The white elephant turned towards the army of the infidels, and no trace was left.

2. Jaisiya enters the fort of Rawar and prepares to fight, *Chach-Nama*⁵

When the news of the death of Dahir arrived, and that the white elephant was hamstrung, Jaisiya, son of Dahir said that he would go to oppose the enemy, and strike a blow to save his honour and name, for it would be no loss if he were to be slain. Sisakar, the minister, observed that the resolve of the prince was not good, the king had been killed, the army defeated and dispersed, and their hearts were averse to battle through fear of the enemy's sword. How could he go to fight with the Arabs? His dominions still existed, and the strongest forts were garrisoned with brave warriors and subjects. It was, therefore, advisable that they should go to the fort of Brahmanabad, which was the inheritance of his father and ancestors. It was the chief residence of Dahir. The treasures and stores were full, and the inhabitants of the place were friends and well wishers of the family of Chach, and would all assist in

fighting against the enemy. Then the Allafi was also asked what he considered proper. He replied that he concurred in this opinion. So Jaisiya assented, and with all their dependants and trusty servants, they went to Brahmanabad. Bai (Main), the wife of Dahir, together with some of the generals, prepared for battle. She reviewed the army in the fort, and fifteen thousand warriors were counted. They had all resolved to die. Next morning, when it was learnt that Dahir had been killed between the Mihran and the stream called Wadhawah, all the chiefs (Rawats) and officers who were attached to the Rani entered the fort. Muhammad Kasim, on receiving the intelligence, marched in that direction, and encamped under the walls. The garrison began to beat drums and sound clarions, and threw down from the ramparts and bastions stones from mangonels and balistas as well as arrows and javelins.

3. The fort is taken and Bai [Main], the sister of Dahir, burns herself, *Chach-Nama*⁶

Muhammad Kasim disposed his army, and ordered the miners to dig and undermine the walls. He divided his army into two divisions; one was to fight during the day with mangonels, arrows, and javelins, and the other to throw naphtha, fardaj (?), and stones during the night. Thus the bastions were thrown down. Bai (Main), the sister of Dahir, assembled all her women, and said, "Jaisiya is separated from us, and Muhammad Kasim is come. God forbid that we should owe our liberty to these outcast cow-eaters! Our honour would be lost! Our respite is at an end, and there is nowhere any hope of escape; let us collect wood, cotton, and oil, for I think that we should burn ourselves and go to meet our husbands. If any wish to save herself she may." So they went into a house, set it on fire, and burnt themselves. Muhammad took the fort, and stayed there for two or three days. He put six thousand fighting men, who were in the fort, to the sword, and shot some with arrows. The other dependants and servants were taken prisoners, with their wives and children.

4. Slaves, cash, taken by Kasim, *Chach-Nama*⁷

It is said that when the fort was captured, all the treasures, property, and arms, except those which were taken away by Jaisiya, fell into the hands of the victors, and they were all brought before Muhammad Kasim. When the number of the prisoners was calculated, it was found to amount to thirty thousand persons, amongst whom thirty were the daughters of chiefs, and one of them was Rai Dahir's sister's daughter, whose name was Jaisiya [Hasna?]. They were sent to Hajjaj. The head of Dahir and the fifth part of the prisoners were forwarded in charge of K'ab, son of Maharak. When the head of Dahir, the women, and the property all reached Hajjaj, he prostrated himself before

God, offered thanksgivings and praises, for, he said, he had in reality obtained all the wealth and treasures and dominions of the world.

5. Resistance offered by Dahir's son and wife, Chach-Nama⁸

It is said, on the authority of the old men of Brahmanabad, that when the fort of Brahmanabad was taken, Ladi, the wife of Dahir Rai, who since Dahir's death had staid in the fort with his son, rose up and said, "How can I leave this strong fort and my family. It is necessary that we should stop here, overcome the enemy, and preserve our homes and dwelling. If the army of the Arabs should be successful, I must pursue some other course. She then brought out all her wealth and treasures, and distributing them among the warriors of the army, she thus encouraged her brave soldiers while the fight was carried on at one of the gates. She had determined that if the fort should be lost, she would burn herself alive with all her relations and children. Suddenly the fort was taken, and the nobles came to the gate of Dahir's palace and brought out his dependants. Ladi was taken prisoner.

6. Ladi, the wife of Dahir taken prisoner along with his two maiden daughters, Chach-Nama⁹

When the plunder and the prisoners of war were brought before Kasim, and enquiries were made about every captive, it was found that Ladi, the wife of Dahir, was in the fort with two daughters of his by his other wives. Veils were put on their faces, and they were delivered to a servant to keep them apart. One-fifth of all the prisoners were chosen and set aside; they were counted as amounting to twenty thousand in number, and the rest were given to the soldiers.

Protection is given to the artificers

Protection was given to the artificers, the merchants, and the common people, and those who had been seized from those classes were all liberated. But he (Kasim) sat on the seat of cruelty, and put all those who had fought to the sword. It is said that about six thousand fighting men were slain, but, according to some, sixteen thousand were killed, and the rest were pardoned.

7. Relations of Dahir betrayed, Chach-Nama¹⁰

It is related that when none of the relations of Dahir were found among the prisoners, the inhabitants of the city were questioned respecting them, but no one gave any information or hint about them. But the next day nearly one thousand Brahmans, with shaven heads and beards, were brought before Kasim.

Brahmans came to Muhammad Kasim

When Muhammad Kasim saw them, he asked to what army they belonged, and why they had come in that manner. They replied, "O faithful noble! our king was a Brahman. You have killed him, and have taken his country; but some of us have faithfully adhered to his cause, and have laid down our lives for him; and the rest, mourning for him, have dressed themselves in yellow clothes, and have shaved their heads and beards. As now the Almighty God has given this country into your possession, we have come submissively to you, just Lord, to know what may be your orders for us." Muhammad Kasim began to think, and said, "By my soul and head, they are good, faithful people. I give them protection, but on this condition, that they bring hither the dependents of Dahir, wherever they may be." Thereupon they brought out Ladi. Muhammad Kasim fixed a tax upon all the subjects, according to the laws of the Prophet. Those who embraced the Muhammadan faith were exempted from slavery, the tribute, and the poll-tax; and from those who did not change their creed a tax was exacted according to three grades. The first grade was of great men, and each of these was to pay silver, equal to forty-eight dirams in weight, the second grade twenty-four dirams, and the lowest grade twelve dirams. It was ordered that all who should become Musulmans at once should be exempted from the payment, but those who were desirous of adhering to their old persuasion must pay the tribute and poll-tax. Some showed an inclination to abide by their creed, and some having resolved upon paying tribute, held by the faith of the forefathers, but their lands and property were not taken from them.

8. Order from the Capital to Muhammad Kasim, *Chach-Nama*¹¹

...when Rai Dahir was killed, his two virgin daughters were seized in his palace, and Muhammad Kasim had sent them to Baghdad under the care of his negro slaves. The Khalifa of the time sent them into his harem to be taken care of for a few days till they were fit to be presented to him. After some time, the remembrance of them recurred to the noble mind of the Khalifa, and he ordered them both to be brought before him at night. Walid 'Abdul Malik told the interpreter to inquire from them which of them was the eldest, that he might retain her by him, and call the other sister at another time. The interpreter first asked their names. The eldest said, "My name is Suryadeo," and the youngest replied, "my name is Parmaldeo." He called the eldest to him, and the youngest he sent back to be taken care of. When he had made the former sit down, and she uncovered her face, the Khalifa of the time looked at her, and was enamoured of her surpassing beauty and charms. Her powerful glances robbed his heart of patience. He laid his hand upon Suryadeo and drew

her towards him. But Suryadeo stood up, and said, "Long live the king! I am not worthy the king's bed, because the just Commander Imadu-d-Din Muhammad Kasim kept us three days near himself before he sent us to the royal residence. Perhaps it is a custom among you; but such ignominy should not be suffered by kings." The Khalifa was overwhelmed with love, and the reins of patience had fallen from his hand. Through indignation he could not stop to scrutinize the matter. He asked for ink and paper, and commenced to write a letter with his own hand, commanding that at whatever place Mu-hammad Kasim had arrived, he should suffer himself to be sewed up in a hide and sent to the capital.

9. Muhammad Kasim reaches Udhafar, and receives the order from the Khalifa's capital, *Chach-Nama*¹²

When Muhammad Kasim received the letter at Udhafar, he gave the order to his people and they sewed him up in a hide, put him in a chest, and sent him back. Muhammad Kasim thus delivered his soul to God. The officers who were appointed to the different places remained at their stations, while he was taken in the chest to the Khalifa of the time. The private chamberlain reported to Walid 'Abdul-Malik, son of Marwan, that Muhammad Kasim Sakifi had been brought to the capital. The Khalifa asked whether he was alive or dead. It was replied, "May the Khalifa's life, prosperity, and honour be prolonged to eternity. When the royal mandates were received in the city of Udhapur, Muhammad Kasim immediately, according to the orders, had himself sewed up in a raw hide, and after two days delivered his soul to God and went to the eternal world. The authorities whom he had placed at different stations maintain the country in their possession, the Khutba continues to be read in the name of the Khalifa, and they use their best endeavours to establish their supremacy."

10. The Khalifa opens the chest, *Chach-Nama*¹³

The Khalifa then opened the chest and called the girls into his presence. He had a green bunch of myrtle in his hand, and pointing with it towards the face of the corpse, said, "See, my daughters, how my commands which are sent to my agents are observed and obeyed by all. When these my orders reached Kanauj, he sacrificed his precious life at my command."

11. The address of Janki, daughter of Dahir, to Khalifa 'Abdu-l Malik, son of Marwan, *Chach-Nama*¹⁴

Then the virtuous Janki [different from the name she first gave the Khalifa] put off the veil from her face, placed her head on the ground, and said, "May the king live long, may his prosperity and glory increase for many years; and may he be adorned with perfect wisdom. It is proper that a king

should test with the touchstone of reason and weigh in his mind whatever he hears from friend or foe, and when it is found to be true and indubitable, then orders compatible with justice should be given. By so doing he will not fall under the wrath of God, nor be contemned by the tongue of man. Your orders have been obeyed, but your gracious mind is wanting in reason and judgement. Muhammad Kasim respected our honour, and behaved like a brother or son to us, and he never touched us, your slaves, with a licentious hand. But he had killed the king of Hind and Sind, he had destroyed the dominion of our forefathers, and he had degraded us from the dignity of royalty to a state of slavery, therefore, to retaliate and to revenge these injuries, we uttered a falsehood before the Khalifa, and our object has been fulfilled. Through this fabrication and deceit have we taken our revenge. Had the Khalifa not passed such peremptory orders; had he not lost his reason through the violence of his passion, and had he considered it proper to investigate the matter, he would not have subjected himself to this repentance and reproach; and had Muhammad Kasim, assisted by his wisdom, come to within one day's journey from this place, and then have put himself into a hide, he would have been liberated after inquiry, and not have died." The Khalifa was very sorry at this explanation, and from excess of regret he bit the back of his hand.

Janki again addressed the Khalifa

Janki again opened her lips and looked at the Khalifa. She perceived that his anger was much excited, and she said, "The king has committed a very grievous mistake, for he ought not, on account of two slave girls, to have destroyed a person who had taken captive a hundred thousand modest women like us, who had brought down seventy chiefs who ruled over Hind and Sind from their thrones to their coffins; and who instead of temples had erected mosques, pulpits, and minarets. If Muhammad Kasim had been guilty of any little neglect or impropriety, he ought not to have been destroyed on the mere word of a designing person." The Khalifa ordered both the sisters to be enclosed between walls. From that time to this day the flags of Islam have been more and more exalted every day, and are still advancing.

D. THE RASHTRAKUTAS

1. Balahara – fourth greatest king in the world, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*¹⁵

The Indians and the Chinese are in agreement that the number of the kings of the world is four. The first of these four that they count is the king of

the Arabs. There is a consensus amongst them, and there is no difference of opinion in that he is the greatest of the kings; that he is the richest and the most magnificent; and that he is the king of the great faith above which there is nothing else. Then the king of China counts himself as the next [king] after the king of the Arabs; then the king of al-Rum; then Ballahara, the king of the [people] whose ears are perforated.

As for this Ballahara, verily he is the noblest among the Indians, and they acknowledge his nobility. Each one of the kings of India is the sovereign of his own country, but they acknowledge his suzerainty. Thus, when his ambassadors visit other kings, they pay homage to his ambassadors as a mark of respect for him. This king pays allowances [to the soldiers] as the Arabs do. He possesses a large number of horses and elephants and has abundance of riches. His wealth consists of *dirhams* called *al-Tatariya*. Each *dirham* weighs a *dirham* and a half of the royal currency. The date of his [reign] in the year of his rule is (determined) by the death of the previous [ruler]. It is unlike the tradition of the Arabs whose [calendar is determined] from the period of the Prophet (May Peace be Upon Him). On the other hand, their calendar is [fixed] according to [the reign] of the kings. Their kings have long lives, and sometimes a king rules for fifty years.

2. Greatest king of India, Ibn Khurdadhbih¹⁶

The greatest king of India is Balhara [the Rashtrakuta ruler, Govinda III], that is to say, ‘the king of kings’. Among the other kings of India are: Jaba [hill state of Chamba], the king of al-Taqa [between the Beas and Indus], the king of al-Jurz, [Nagabhatta II of the Pratihara dynasty], Ghaba [Jaba], Rahma [Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty], and the king of Qamrun [Kamarupa]...

The greatest king of India is Balhara which means ‘the king of kings’. His signet-ring has the following engraved on it: ‘Anyone who loves you with a purpose will turn his back up on you as soon as it is served.’ He resides in al-Kumkam, the land of teak-wood. He is followed by the King of al-Taqa; then comes Jaba; then after him comes the King of al-Jurz; he uses the *Tatariya dirhams* [as his currency]. He is followed by Ghaba (Jaba); and then comes Rahma (Dharma). Between his kingdom and those of the others there is a journey of one year. It is related that he possesses fifty thousand elephants. In his kingdom are found the cotton-velvet cloth and the Indian aloes-wood. Then comes the king of Qamrun (Qamarub). His kingdom adjoins China. In his country there is abundant gold and rhinoceros. This animal has a single horn in his forehead, which is one cubit long and two handfuls in thickness. One usually finds inside it an image from one end of the horn to the other, so that when it is ripped open you will see the white image on a jet-black background

having the shape of either a human being, an animal, fish, peacock, or some other bird. The Chinese make girdles out of it, and the price of each one ranges from three hundred to three thousand or up to four thousand *dinars*. All the above-mentioned kings have perforated ears.

3. Kings of India turn their faces towards him in their prayers, Al Masudi¹⁷

The greatest of the kings of India in our time is the Balhara [Indra III], sovereign of the city of Mankir. Many of the kings of India turn their faces towards him in their prayers, and they make supplications to his ambassadors, who come to visit them. The kingdom of Balhara is bordered by many other countries of India. Some kings have their territory in the mountains away from the sea, like the Rai, King of Kashmir, the King of Tafan, and others. There are other kings who possess both land and sea. The capital of the Balhara is eighty Sindi parasangs from the sea, and the parasang is equal to eight miles. His troops and elephants are innumerable, but his troops are mostly infantry, because the seat of his government is among the mountains.

4. Balhara possesses many war elephants, Al Masudi¹⁸

Of all the kings of Sind and India, there is no one who pays greater respect to the Musulmans than the Balhara. In his kingdom Islam is honoured and protected...The money consists of dirhams, called Tahiriya, each weighing a dirham and a half. They are impressed with the date of the reign, The Balhara possesses many war elephants. This country is also called Kamkar. On one side it is exposed to the attacks of the king of Juzr [Guzerat]; a king who is rich in horses and camels, and has a large army.

5. Balhara has an extensive territory, Abu Ishak al Istakhri¹⁹

From Kambaya to Saimur is the land of the Balhara, and in it there are several Indian kings. It is a land of infidels, but there are Musalmans in its cities, and none but Musalmans rule over them on the part of the Balhara. There are Jama masjids in them. The city in which the Balhara dwells is Mankir, which has an extensive territory.

E. AL-JURZ [AL-JURZARA, GURJARA]

1. Gujara-desa, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²⁰

Among them there is a king who is called the king of al-Jurz. He has a

large army, and none [of the kings] of India has a cavalry comparable to his. He is an enemy of the Arabs, but he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest king. And among the Indian [kings] none is a greater enemy of Islam than he is. His [kingdom] lies on 'a tongue of the land'. The kingdom has abundance of wealth and numerous camels and cattle. The commercial means of exchange in it are the silver ingots, and it is said that the kingdom has [silver] mines. There is no place in India more secure than this from theft.

2. The king of Jurz, Sulaiman²¹

This king [of Jurz] maintains numerous forces, and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings. Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Muhammadan faith than he. His territories form a tongue of land. He has great riches, and his camels and horses are numerous. Exchanges are carried on in his state with silver (and gold) in dust, and there are said to be mines (of these metals) in the country. There is no country in India more safe from robbers.

F. KINGS OF BENGAL

1. King called Dharma, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²²

Adjacent to them is a king called Dharma with whom the king of al-Jurz wages wars, but he is not superior in sovereignty; he also carries on wars with Ballahara as he does with the king of al-Jurz. This Dharma has a larger army as compared to the King Ballahara, the king of al-Jurz and the King al-Taqa. It is said that when he goes out for a combat he carries about fifty thousand elephants, and he does not go [to war] except in the winter season, for the elephants cannot endure thirst. Hence he is not able to go [to war] except in winter. It is said that the number of the washermen of his army is about ten to fifteen thousand.

Cloth so fine as passes through ring

In his country one finds cloth, the like of which is not found in any other [kingdom]. A piece of this cloth can be passed through the circle of a ring as it is so fine and beautiful. It is made of cotton, and we have seen some of them. In his country cowry-shell is used which is the money of the land, that is to say, his wealth. In his country there is also gold, silver, aloes-wood and *alsamar* cloth from which the fly-whisk is made.

2. Tripartite struggle, Sulaiman²³

These three states border on a kingdom called Ruhmi, which is at war with that of Jurz. The king is not held in very high estimation. He is at war with the Balhara as he is with the king of Jurz. His troops are more numerous than those of the Balhara, the king of Jurz, or the king of Tafak.

3. Rahma has more troops than the Balhara, Al Masudi²⁴

Beyond this kingdom is that of Rahma, which is the title for their kings, and generally at the same time their name. His dominions border on those of the king of Juzr [Guzerat], and, on one side, on those of the Balhara, with both of whom he is frequently at war. The Rahma has more troops, elephants, and horses, than the Balhara, the king of Juzr and of Tafan. When he takes the field, he has no less than fifty thousand elephants. He never goes to war but in winter, because elephants cannot bear thirst. His forces are generally exaggerated; some assert that the number of fullers and washers in his camp is from ten to fifteen thousand...The kingdom of Rahma extends both along the sea and the continent. It is bounded by an inland state called the kingdom of Kaman. The inhabitants are fair, and have their ears pierced. They have elephants, camels, and horses. Both sexes are generally handsome.

4. Rai Lakhmaniya of Bengal [twelfth century], Minhaju-s Siraj²⁵

He was a great Rai, and had sat upon the throne for a period of eighty years. A story about that Rai may be here related:

When the father of the Rai departed this world, he was in the womb of his mother, so the crown was placed upon her belly, and all the great men expressed their loyalty before her. His family was respected by all the Rais or chiefs of Hindustan, and was considered to hold the rank of Khalif, or sovereign. When the time of the birth of Lakhmaniya drew near, and symptoms of delivery appeared, his mother assembled the astrologers and Brahmans, in order that they might see if the aspect of the time was auspicious. They all unanimously said that if the child were born at that moment it would be exceedingly unlucky, for he would not become a sovereign. But that if the birth occurred two hours later the child would reign for eighty years. When his mother heard this opinion of the astrologers, she ordered her legs to be tied together, and caused herself to be hung with her head downwards. She also directed the astrologers to watch for the auspicious time. When they all agreed that the time for delivery was come, she ordered herself to be taken down, and Lakhmaniya was born directly, but he had no sooner come into the world than his mother died from the anguish she had endured. Lakhmaniya was placed upon the throne, and he ruled for eighty years. It is said by

trustworthy persons that no one, great or small, ever suffered injustice at his hands. He used to give a lac to every person that asked him for charity; as was also the custom of the generous Sultan, the Hatim of the time, Kutbu-d din. In that country the current money is *kaudas* (kauris) instead of *chitals*, and the smallest present he made was a lac of *kaudas*...

G. KINGDOM OF LAKHIMPUR

1. Kingdom in interior, *Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India*²⁶

Next to him is a king whose [kingdom] is in the interior. He has no [access] to the sea. He is called the King of Lakshmibur. The [inhabitants of this realm] are white people; they have pierced ears and are handsome. They are the dwellers of deserts and mountains.

2. Kingdom borders on China, *Ibn Khurdadhib*²⁷

The king of Assam (Qamrun) is a king of *al-Hind*...whose kingdom borders on China and abounds in gold.

H. KINGDOM OF TAFAR

The state of Tafar, Sulaiman²⁸

By the side of this kingdom lies that of Tafak, which is but a small state. The women are white, and the most beautiful in India. The king lives at peace with his neighbours, because his soldiers are so few. He esteems the Arabs as highly as the Balhara does.

I. KINGDOM OF KASHMIR

Powerful king, *Chach-Nama*²⁹

...the king of Kashmir who is the mighty possessor of a crown, kettledrums and standards, on whose royal threshold the other kings of Hind have placed their heads, who sways the whole of Hind and even the country of Makran and Turan, whose chains many grandees and lords have willingly placed on their knees...

J. KINGDOM OF KIRANJ

1. A kingdom called Kiranj, Sulaiman³⁰

Afterwards comes a sea, on the shores of which there is a kingdom called Kiranj [the country of Kalinga on that coast?]. Its king is poor and proud. He collects large quantities of amber, and is equally well provided with elephant's teeth. They eat pepper green in this country because it is scarce.

2. The kingdom of Firanj, Al Masudi³¹

Afterwards comes the kingdom of Firanj, which has power both on land and sea. It is situated on a tongue of land which stretches into the sea, from whence large quantities of amber are obtained. The country produces only little pepper, but large numbers of elephants are found here. The king is brave, haughty, and proud, but to tell the truth he has more haughtiness than power, and more pride than courage.

K. KINGDOM OF KANAUJ

1. Centre of learning, Abu Zayd³²

...poets, astronomers, philosophers and diviners [are concentrated above all] in Kanauj, a large country forming the kingdom of al-Jurz.

2. Bhaura [Mihir Bhoja the great ruler of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty?], Al Masudi³³

One of the neighbouring kings of India, who is far from the sea, is the Bauura, who is lord of the city of Kanauj. This is the title given to all the sovereigns of that kingdom. He has large armies in garrisons on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, for he is surrounded on all sides by warlike kings...

The kingdom of the Bauura, king of Kanauj, extends about one hundred and twenty square parasangs of Sind, each parasang being equal to eight miles of this country. This king has four armies, according to the four quarters of the wind. Each of them numbers 700,000 or 900,000 men. The army of the north wars against the prince of Multan, and with the Musulmans, his subjects, on the frontier. The army of the south fights against the Balhara, king of Mankir. The other two armies march to meet enemies in every direction.

3. Kanauj, Alberuni³⁴

The middle of *al-Hind* is the country around Kanauj, which they call

Madhyadesha, i.e., the middle of the realm. It is the middle or centre from a geographical point of view, in so far as it lies halfway between the sea and the mountains, in the midst between the hot and the cold provinces, and also between the eastern and western frontiers of *al-Hind*. But it is a political centre too, because in former times it was the residence of their famous heroes and kings.

L. THE CHOLA KINGDOM

1. War elephants in Chola dominions, Chau Ju-Kua³⁵

"The country is at war with the kingdoms of the west (of India?). The government owns sixty thousand war elephants, every one seven or eight feet high. When fighting these elephants carry on their backs houses, and these houses are full of soldiers who shoot arrows at long range, and fight with spears at close quarters. When victorious, the elephants are granted honorary names to signalize their merit."

2. Embassies from Coromandel to China, Chau Ju-Kua³⁶

In former times they did not send tribute to our court, but "in the eighth year of the *ta-chung* and *siang-Iu* periods (A.D. 1015), its sovereign sent a mission with pearls and like articles as tribute. The interpreters, in translating their speech, said they wished to evince the respect of a distant nation for (Chinese) civilisation." They were ordered by Imperial decree to remain in waiting at the side gate of the Palace, and to be entertained at a banquet by the Associates in the College of Court Annalists. By Imperial favour they were ranked with envoys of K'iu-tz-i. It happened to be the Emperor's birthday, and the envoys had a fine opportunity to witness the congratulations in the Sacred Enclosure.

"In the tenth year *si-ning* (1077) they again sent tribute of native produce. The Emperor Shun-tsung sent an officer of the Inner Department (i.e., a Chamberlain) to bid them welcome."

3. Feasts in Chola dominions, Ma Twan-lin³⁷

During feasts, the king and the four great officers salute each other, crossing their hands, and inclining the body like the Buddhist priests; then they all sit together. They eat meat, but they do not drink wine. They have different sorts of soups, cakes and particular dishes of very good taste. They wear cotton clothes. The feast is accompanied by music, singing and dances. The service is done by women.

M. KINGDOM OF TELINGANA

Akhbar Al-Sin wa'l Hind, An Account of China and India³⁸

[The king is] called al-Tanluwing. He is poor but arrogant. He gets plenty of ambergris and has elephant tusks. He has black pepper which is eaten fresh because of its scarcity there.

N. THE KING OF NAN-P'I COUNTRY [THE COUNTRY OF NAIRS, MALABAR]

Ruler goes barefoot, Chau Ju-Kua³⁹

The ruler of the country has his body draped, but goes barefooted. He wears a turban and a loin-cloth, both of white cotton cloth. Sometimes he wears a white cotton shirt with narrow sleeves. When going out he rides an elephant, and wears a golden hat ornamented with pearls and gems.

On his arm is fastend a band of gold, and around his leg is a golden chain. Among his regalia is a standard of peacock feathers on a staff of vermillion colour; over twenty men guard it round.

Women Guards

He is attended by a guard of some five hundred picked foreign women, chosen for their fine physique. Those in front lead the way with dancing, their bodies draped, barefooted and with a cotton loincloth. Those behind ride horses bareback; they have a loincloth, their hair is done up and they wear necklaces of pearls and anklets of gold, their bodies are perfumed with camphor and musk and other drugs, and umbrellas of peacock feathers shield them from the sun.

In front of the dancing-women are carried the officers of the king's train, seated in litters of white foreign cotton, and which are called *pu-tai-kiau* [manjil, a kind of hammock-litter] and are borne on poles plated with gold and silver.

O. THE KINGDOM OF MABAR

1. Knights in Mabar die with king, Marco Polo⁴⁰

The king [of Mabar] retains about his person many knights, who are distinguished by an appellation, signifying "the devoted servants of his majesty, in this world and the next." These attend upon his person at court, ride by his

side in processions, and accompany him on all occasions. They exercise considerable authority in every part of the realm. Upon the death of the king, and when the ceremony of burning his body takes place, all these devoted servants throw themselves into the same fire, and are consumed with the royal corpse; intending by this act to bear him company in another life.

The following custom likewise prevails. When a king dies, the son who succeeds him does not meddle with the treasure which the former had amassed, under the impression that it would reflect upon his own ability to govern, if being left in full possession of the territory, he did not show himself as capable of enriching the treasury as his father was. In consequence of this prejudice it is supposed that immense wealth is accumulated by successive generations.

2. The king, Marco Polo⁴¹

The king is extremely rich and powerful, and has much delight in the possession of pearls and valuable stones. When the traders from Maabar present to him such as are of superior beauty, he trusts to their word with respect to the estimation of their value, and gives them double the sum that each is declared to have cost them. Under these circumstances, he has the offer of many fine jewels.

3. Royal horses, Marco Polo⁴²

No horses being bred in this country, the king and his three royal brothers expend large sums of money annually in the purchase of them from merchants of Ormus, Diufar, Pecher, and Adem, who carry them thither for sale, and become rich by the traffic, as they import to the number of five thousand, and for each of them obtain five hundred saggi of gold, being equal to one hundred marks of silver. At the end of the year, in consequence, as it is supposed, of their not having persons properly qualified to take care of them or to administer the requisite medicines, perhaps not three hundred of these remain alive, and thus the necessity is occasioned for replacing them annually. But it is my opinion that the climate of the province is unfavorable to the race of horses, and that from hence arises the difficulty in breeding or preserving them. For food they give them flesh dressed with rice and other prepared meats, the country not producing any grain besides rice. A mare, although of a large size, and covered by a handsome horse, produces small ill-made colt, with distorted legs, and unfit to be trained for riding.

4. The rulers of Mabar, Abdu-Llah, Wassaf⁴³

Mabar extends in length from Kulam to Nilawar (Nellore), nearly three hundred parasangs along the seacoast, and in the language of that country the

king is called Dewar, which signifies the Lord of Empire. The curiosities of Chin and Machin, and the beautiful products of Hind and Sind, laden on large ships (which they call junks), sailing like mountains with the wings to the wind on the surface of the water, are always arriving there. The wealth of the Isles of the Persian Gulf in particular, and in part the beauty and adornment of other countries, from 'Irak and Khurasan as far as Rum and Europe, are derived from Ma'bar, which is so situated as to be the key of Hind.

Sundar Pandi

A few years since the Dewar was Sundar Pandi who had three brothers, each of whom established himself in independence in some different country. The eminent prince, the margrave (*marzban*) of Hind, Takiu-d din 'Abdu-r Rahman, son of Mu-hammadu-t Tibi, whose virtues and accomplishments have for a long time been the theme of praise and admiration among the chief inhabitants of that beautiful country, was the Dewar's deputy, minister, and adviser, and was a man of sound judgement. Fitan, Mali Fitān and Kabil were made over to his possession, for he is still worthy (*kabil*) of having the Khutba read in his name, and, notwithstanding these high dignities, is not worthy of seditions (*fitna*).

Horses imported

It was a matter of agreement that Maliku-l Islam Jamalu-d din and the merchants should embark every year from the island of Kais and land at Ma'bar 1,400 horses of his own breed, and of such generous origin that, in comparison with them the most celebrated horses of antiquity, such as the Rukhs of Rustam, etc., should be as worthless as the horse of the chessboard. It was also agreed that he should embark as many as he could procure from all the isles of Persia, such as Katif, Lahsa, Bahrein, Hurmuz and Kulhatu. The price of each horse was fixed from of old at 220 dinars of red gold, on this condition, that if any horses should sustain any injury during the voyage, or should happen to die, the value of them should be paid from the royal treasury. It is related by authentic writers, that in the reign of Atabak Abu Bakr, 10,000 horses were annually exported from these places to Ma'bar, Kambayat, and other ports in their neighborhood, and the sum total of their value amounted to 2,200,000 dinars, which was paid out of the overflowing revenues of the estates and endowments belonging to the Hindu temples, and from the tax upon courtesans attached to them, and no charge was incurred by the public treasury. It is a strange thing that when those horses arrive there, instead of giving them raw barley they give them roasted barley and grain dressed with butter, and boiled cow's milk to drink....

They bind them for forty days in a stable with ropes and pegs, in order that they may get fat; and afterwards, without taking measures for training, and without stirrups and other appurtenances of riding, the Indian soldiers ride upon them like demons.

They are equal to Burak in celerity, and are employed either in war or exercise. In a short time the most strong, swift, fresh, and active horses become weak, slow, useless, and stupid. In short, they all become wretched and good for nothing. In this climate these powerful horses which fly swiftly without a whip (for whips are required for horses, especially if they are to go any distance), should they happen to cover, become exceedingly weak and altogether worn out and unfit for riding. There is, therefore, a constant necessity of getting new horses annually, and, consequently, the merchants of Muhammadan countries bring them to Ma'bar, Their loss is not without its attendant advantage, for it is a providential ordinance of God that the western should continue in want of eastern products, and the eastern world of western products, and that the north should with labour procure the goods of the south, and the south be furnished in like manner with commodities brought in ships from the north. Consequently, the means of easy communication are always kept up between these different quarters, as the social nature of human beings necessarily requires and profits by...

Extent of wealth

In the months of the year 692 H. the above-mentioned Dewar, the ruler of Ma'bar, died, and left behind him much wealth and treasure. It is related by Maliku-l Islam Jamalu-d din, that out of that treasure 7,000 oxen, laden with precious stones, and pure gold and silver, fell to the share of the brother who succeeded him. Malik-i a'zam Takiu-d din continued prime minister as before, and, in fact, ruler of that kingdom, and his glory and magnificence were raised a thousand times higher.

Notwithstanding the immense wealth acquired by trade, he gave orders that whatever commodities and goods were imported from the remotest parts of China and Hind into Ma'bar, his agents and factors should be allowed the first selection, until which no one else was allowed to purchase. When he had selected his goods he dispatched them on his own ships, or delivered them to merchants and ship owners to carry to the island of Kais. There also it was not permitted to any merchant to contract a bargain until the factors of Maliku-l Islam had selected what they required, and after that the merchants were allowed to buy whatever was suited to the wants of Ma'bar. The remnants were exported on ships and beasts of burden to the isles of the sea, and the countries of the east and west, and with the prices obtained by their sale such

goods were purchased as were suitable for the home market; and the trade was so managed that the produce of the remotest China was consumed in the farthest west. No one has seen the like of it in the world...

P. THE KINGS OF INDIA THE GREATER

1. Distinct from others, Friar Jordanus⁴⁴

...the kings have this distinction from others, that they wear upon their arms gold and silver rings, and on the neck a gold collar with a great abundance of gems.

Succession in India the Greater

In this India never do (even) the legitimate sons of great kings, or princes, or barons, inherit the goods of their parents, but only the sons of their sisters; for they say that they have no surety that those are their own sons, because wives and mistresses may conceive and generate by some one else; but 'tis not so with the sister, for whatever man may be the father they are certain that the offspring is from the womb of their sister, and is consequently thus truly of their blood.

2. Many idolatrous kings in India the Greater, Friar Jordanus⁴⁵

In this Greater India are twelve idolatrous kings, and more. For there is one very powerful king in the country where pepper grows, and his kingdom is called Molebar. There is also the king of Singyli and the king of Columbum, the king of which is called Lingua, but his kingdom Mohebar. There is also the king of Molephatam, whose kingdom is called Molepoor, where pearls are taken in infinite quantities. There is also another king in the island of Sylen, where are found precious stones and good elephants. There be also three or four kings on the island of Java, where the good spices grow. There be also other kings, as the king of Telenc, who is very potent and great. The kingdom of Telenc abounds in corn, rice, sugar, wax, honey and honeycomb, pulse, eggs, goats, buffalos, beeves, milk, butter, and in oils of divers kinds and in many excellent fruits, more than any other part of the Indies. There is also the kingdom of Maratha which is very great; and there is the king of Batigala, but he is of the Saracens. There be also many kings in Chopa.

What shall I say? The greatness of this India is beyond description. But let this much suffice concerning India the Greater and the Less.

Q. THE ZAMORIN

1. Samuri [Samudri, Sea King, Zamorin according to the Portuguese], Ibn Batutta⁴⁶

The sultan of Calicut is an infidel, known is 'the Samari.' He is an aged man and shaves his beard, as some of the Greeks do. In this town too lives the famous shipowner Mithqal, who possesses vast wealth and many ships for his trade with India, China, Yemen, and Fars. When we reached the city, the principal inhabitants and merchants and the sultan's representative came out to welcome us, with drums, trumpets, bugles and standards on their ships. We entered the harbour in great pomp, the like of which I have never seen in those lands, but it was a joy to be followed by distress.

2. The Zamorin, Abder Razzak⁴⁷

The sovereign of this city bears the title of *Sameri* [the Zamorin]. When he dies it is his sister's son who succeeds him, and his inheritance does not belong to his son, or his brother, or any other of his relations. No one reaches the throne by means of the strong hand...

When I obtained my audience of this prince, the hall was filled with two or three thousand Hindus, who wore the costume above described; the principal personages amongst the Mussulmauns were also present. After they had made me take a seat, the letter of his majesty, the happy Khakan [Mirza Shah Rukh], was read, and they caused to pass in procession before the throne, the horse, the pelisse, the garment of cloth of gold, and the cap to be worn at the ceremony of Nauruz. The *Sameri* showed me but little consideration...

On a sudden a man arrived, who brought me the intelligence that the king of Bidjanagar [Vijayanagar], who holds a powerful empire and a mighty dominion under his sway, had sent to the *Sameri* a delegate charged with a letter, in which he desired that he would send on to him the ambassador of his majesty, the happy Khakan [Mirza Shah Rukh]. Although the *Sameri* is not subject to the laws of the king of Bidjanagar, he nevertheless pays him respect, and stands extremely in fear of him; since, if what is said is true, this latter prince has in his dominions three hundred ports, each of which is equal to Calicut, and on *terra firma* his territories comprise a space of three months' journey. The coast, which includes Calicut with some other neighbouring ports, and which extends as far as Kabel, a place situated opposite the Island of Serendib, otherwise called Ceylon, bears the general name of Melibar. From Calicut are vessels continually sailing for Mecca, which are for the most part laden with pepper. The inhabitants of Calicut are adventurous sailors: they

are known by the name of Tchini-betchegan (son of the Chinese), and pirates do not dare to attack the vessels of Calicut...

R. KING OF VIJAYANAGAR

1. Powerful ruler, Abder Razzak⁴⁸

...we arrived at the city of Bidjanagar. The king sent a numerous corteg to meet us, and appointed us a very handsome house for our residence.

The preceding details, forming a close narrative of events, have shown to readers and writers that the chances of a maritime voyage had led Abd-er-Razzak, the author of this work, to the city of Bidjanagar. He saw a place extremely large and thickly peopled; and a king possessing greatness and sovereignty to the highest degree, whose dominion extends from the frontier of Serendib to the extremities of the country of Kalbergah. From the frontiers of Bengal to the environs of Belinar (Melibar), the distance is more than a thousand parasangs. The country is for the most part well cultivated, very fertile, and contains about three hundred harbours. One sees there more than a thousand elephants, in their size resembling mountains, and in their forms resembling devils. The troops amount in number to eleven lak (1,100,00).

One might seek in vain throughout the whole of Hindoostan to find a more absolute *rai* (king); for the monarchs of this country bear the title of *rai*. Next to him the Brahmins hold a rank superior to that of all other men. The book of Kalilah and Dimna, the most beautiful work existing in the Persian language, and which presents us with the stories of a *rai* and a Brahmin, is probably a production of the talent of the literati of this country.

2. Audience with king, Abder Razzak⁴⁹

The author of this narrative, having arrived in this city at the end of the month of *Zou'lhidjah* [the end of April 1443] took up his abode in an extremely lofty house, which had been assigned to him.... One day some messengers sent from the palace of the king came to seek me, and at the close of that same day I presented myself at court, and offered for the monarch's acceptance five beautiful horses, and some *tokouz* of damask and satin. The prince was seated in a hall, surrounded by the most imposing attributes of state. Right and left of him stood a numerous crowd of men ranged in a circle. The king was dressed in a robe of green satin, around his neck he wore a collar, composed of pearls of beautiful water and other splendid gems. He had an olive complexion, his frame was thin, and he was rather tall; on his cheeks might be seen a slight down, but there was no beard on his chin. The expression of his countenance

was extremely pleasing. On being led into the presence of this prince I bowed my head three times. The monarch received me with interest, and made me take a seat very near him. When he took the august letter of the emperor, he handed it to the interpreter and said: "My heart is truly delighted to see that a great king has been pleased to send me an ambassador."

As the humble author of this narrative, in consequence of the heat, and the great number of robes in which he was dressed, was drowned in perspiration, the monarch took pity upon him, and sent him a fan, similar to the khata which he held in his hand. After this a salver was brought, and they presented to the humble author two packets of betel, a purse containing five hundred *fanoms*, and twenty *mithkals* of camphor. Then, receiving permission to depart he returned to his house. Hitherto his provisions had been brought him daily, consisting of two sheep, four pair of fowls, five *man* of rice, one of butter, one of sugar, and two *varahahs* of gold; and they continued supplying him regularly with the same articles. Twice in the week, at the close of day, the king sent for him, and put questions to him respecting his majesty, the happy Khakan. On each occasion the author received a packet of betel, a purse of *fanoms*, and some *mithkal* of camphor.

The king said to him by his interpreter: "Your monarchs invite an ambassador, and receive him to their table; as you and we may not eat together, this purse full of gold is the feast we give to an ambassador." . . .

3. Royal entourage at Vijayanagar, Nicolo Conti⁵⁰

Their king is more powerful than all the other kings of India. He takes to himself twelve thousand wives, of whom four thousand follow him on foot wherever he may go, and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horseback. The remainder are carried by men in litters, of whom two thousand or three thousand are selected as his wives on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him, which is considered to be a great honour for them.

4. Weapons at Vijayanagar, Nicolo Conti⁵¹

The natives of this part of India, when engaged in war, use javelins, swords, arm-pieces, round shields, and also bows. The inhabitants of the other parts of India wear also the helmet and corslet. The natives of central India make use of balistae, and those machines which we call bombardas, also other warlike implements adapted for besieging cities. They call us Franks, and say: "While they call other nations blind, that they themselves have two eyes and that we have but one, because they consider that they excel all others in prudence."

S. THE KING OF COCHIN

The king of Ko-Chih [Cochin], Ma Huan⁵²

The king or ruler is of the solar race, and is a sincere believer in Buddhism [Ma Huan does not distinguish between Hinduism and Buddhism], and has the greatest reverence for elephants and oxen; and every morning at daylight prostrates himself before an image of Buddha. The king wears no clothing on the upper part of his person; he has simply a square of silk wound round his loins, kept in place by a coloured waistband of the same material, and on his head a turban of yellow or white cotton cloth. The dress of the officers and the rich differs but little from that of the king.

T. THE KING OF CALICUT

1. King of Nair caste, Ma Huan⁵³

The king belongs to the Nair class, and, like his brother of Cochin, is a sincere follower of Buddha, and as such does not eat beef; his overseer, being a Muhammadan, does not eat pork. This led, it is said in times past, to a compact being made between the king and his overseer, to the effect that if the king would give up eating pork the overseer would give up eating beef. This compact has been most scrupulously observed by the successors of both parties up to the present day.

The king at his devotions prostrates himself before an image of Buddha every morning; which being over, his attendants collect all the cow-dung about the place, and smear it over the image of the god. Some of the dung the king orders to be burnt to ashes and put into a small cotton bag, which he continually wears upon his person; and when his morning ablutions are over, he mixes some of the powdered dung with water and smears it over his forehead and limbs; by so doing he considers he is showing Buddha the greatest reverence.

Muhammadan subjects

Many of the King's subjects are Muhammadans, and there are twenty or thirty mosques in the kingdom to which the people resort every seventh day for worship. On this day, during the morning, the people being at the mosque, no business whatever is transacted; and in the after part of the day, the services being over, business is resumed...

Succession at Calicut

The succession to the throne is settled in a somewhat curious manner.

The king is not succeeded by his son, but by his sister's son, because his nephew, being born of his sister's body is considered nearer to him by blood. If the king has no sister the succession goes to his brother; if he has no brother it goes to a man of ability and worth. Such has been the rule for many generations.

2. Vasco da Gama's audience with the king⁵⁴

[A Royal Audience, May 28.] The king was in a small court, reclining upon a couch covered with a cloth of green velvet, above which was a good mattress, and upon this again a sheet of cotton stuff, very white and fine, more so than any linen. The cushions were after the same fashion. In his left hand the king held a very large golden cup [spittoon], having a capacity of half an almude [8 pints]. At its mouth this cup was two palmas [16 inches] wide, and apparently it was massive. Into this cup the king threw the husks of a certain herb which is chewed by the people of this country because of its soothing effects, and which they call *atambor* [a corruption of the Arabic *tambur*, betelnut]. On the right side of the king stood a basin of gold, so large that a man might just encircle it with his arms: this contained the herbs. There were likewise many silver jugs. The canopy above the couch was all gilt.

The captain, on entering, saluted in the manner of the country: by putting the hands together, then raising them towards Heaven, as is done by Christians when addressing God, and immediately afterwards opening them and shutting the fists quickly. The king beckoned to the captain with his right hand to come nearer, but the captain did not approach him, for it is the custom of the country for no man to approach the king except only the servant who hands him the herbs, and when anyone addresses the king he holds his hand before the mouth, and remains at a distance. When the king beckoned to the captain he looked at us others, and ordered us to be seated on a stone bench near him, where he could see us. He ordered that water for our hands should be given us, as also some fruit, one kind of which resembled a melon, except that its outside was rough and the inside sweet, whilst another kind of fruit resembled a fig, and tasted very nice [the fruits were the jack and bananas]. There were men who prepared these fruits for us; and the king looked at us eating, and smiled; and talked to the servant who stood near him supplying him with the herbs referred to.

Then, throwing his eyes on the captain, who sat facing him, he invited him to address himself to the courtiers present, saying they were men of much distinction, that he could tell them whatever he desired to say, and they would repeat it to him (the king). The captain-major replied that he was the ambassador of the King of Portugal, and the bearer of a message which he could only deliver to him personally. The king said this was good, and

immediately asked him to be conducted to a chamber. When the captain-major had entered, the king, too, rose and joined him, whilst we remained where we were. All this happened about sunset. An old man who was in the court took away the couch as soon as the king rose, but allowed the plate to remain. The king, when he joined the captain, threw himself upon another couch, covered with various stuffs embroidered in gold, and asked the captain what he wanted.

And the captain told him he was the ambassador of a King of Portugal, who was Lord of many countries and the possessor of great wealth of every description, exceeding that of any king of these parts; that for a period of sixty years his ancestors had annually sent out vessels to make discoveries in the direction of India, as they knew that there were Christian kings there like themselves. This, he said, was the reason which induced them to order this country to be discovered, not because they sought for gold or silver, for of this they had such abundance that they needed not what was to be found in this country. He further stated that the captains sent out travelled for a year or two, until their provisions were exhausted, and then returned to Portugal, without having succeeded in making the desired discovery. There reigned a king now whose name was Dom Manuel, who had ordered him to build three vessels, of which he had been appointed captain-major, and who had ordered him not to return to Portugal until he should have discovered this King of the Christians, on pain of having his head cut off. That two letters had been intrusted to him to be presented in case he succeeded in discovering him, and that he would do so on the ensuing day; and, finally, he had been instructed to say by word of mouth that he [the King of Portugal] desired to be his friend and brother.

In reply to this the king said that he was welcome; that, on his part, he held him as a friend and brother, and would send ambassadors with him to Portugal. This latter had been asked as a favour, the captain pretending that he would not dare to present himself before his king and master unless he was able to present, at the same time, some men of this country.

These and many other things passed between the two in this chamber, and as it was already late in the night, the king asked the captain with whom he desired to lodge, with Christians or with Moors? And the captain replied, neither with Christians nor with Moors, and begged as a favour that he be given a lodging by himself. The king said he would order it thus, upon which the captain took leave of the king and came to where we were, that is, to a veranda lit up by a huge candlestick. By that time four hours of the night had already gone...

[Presents for the King.] On Tuesday [May 29] the captain got ready the

following things to be sent to the king, viz., twelve pieces of *lambel* [striped cloth], four scarlet hoods, six hats, four strings of coral, a case containing six wash-hand basins, a case of sugar, two casks of oil, and two of honey. And as it is the custom not to send anything to the king without the knowledge of the Moor, his factor, and of the *bale* [governor], the captain informed them of his intention. They came, and when they saw the present they laughed at it, saying that it was not a thing to offer to a king, that the poorest merchant from Mecca, or any other part of India, gave more, and that if he wanted to make a present it should be in gold, as the king would not accept such things. When the captain heard this he grew sad, and said that he had brought no gold, that, moreover, he was no merchant, but an ambassador; that he gave of that which he had, which was his own [private gift] and not the king's; that if the King of Portugal ordered him to return he would intrust him with far richer presents; and that if King Camolim [Zamorin, a corruption of Samudriya Raja, king of the coast] would not accept these things he would send them back to the ships. Upon this they declared that they would not forward his presents, nor consent to his forwarding them himself. When they had gone there came certain Moorish merchants, and they all depreciated the present which the captain desired to be sent to the king.

When the captain saw that they were determined not to forward his present, he said, that as they would not allow him to send his present to the palace he would go to speak to the king, and would then return to the ships. They approved of this, and told him that if he would wait a short time they would return and accompany him to the palace. And the captain waited all day, but they never came back. The captain was very wroth at being among so phlegmatic and unreliable a people, and intended, at first, to go to the palace without them. On further consideration, however, he thought it best to wait until the following day. As to us others, we diverted ourselves, singing and dancing to the sound of trumpets, and enjoyed ourselves much.

[*A Second Audience, May 30.*] On Wednesday morning the Moors returned, and took the captain to the palace, and us others with him. The palace was crowded with armed men. Our captain was kept waiting with his conductors for fully four long hours, outside a door, which was only opened when the king sent word to admit him, attended by two men only, whom he might select. The captain said that he desired to have Fernao Martins with him, who could interpret, and his secretary. It seemed to him, as it did to us, that this separation portended no good.

When he had entered, the king said that he had expected him on Tuesday. The captain said that the long road had tired him, and that for this reason he

had not come to see him. The king then said that he had told him that he came from a very rich kingdom, and yet had brought him nothing; that he had also told him that he was the bearer of a letter, which had not yet been delivered. To this the captain rejoined that he had brought nothing, because the object of his voyage was merely to make discoveries, but that when other ships came he would then see what they brought him; as to the letter, it was true that he had brought one, and would deliver it immediately.

The king then asked what it was he had come to discover: stones or men? If he came to discover men, as he said, why had he brought nothing? Moreover, he had been told that he carried with him the golden image of a Santa Maria. The captain said that the Santa Maria was not of gold, and that even if she were he would not part with her, as she had guided him across the ocean, and would guide him back to his own country. The king then asked for the letter. The captain said that he begged as a favour, that as the Moors wished him ill and might misinterpret him, a Christian able to speak Arabic should be sent for. The king said this was well, and at once sent for a young man, of small stature, whose name was Quaram. The captain then said that he had two letters, one written in his own language and the other in that of the Moors; that he was able to read the former, and knew that it contained nothing but what would prove acceptable; but that as to the other he was unable to read it, and it might be good, or contain something that was erroneous. As the Christian was unable to read Moorish, four Moors took the letter and read it between them, after which they translated it to the king, who was well satisfied with its contents.

The king then asked what kind of merchandise was to be found in his country. The captain said there was much corn, cloth, iron, bronze, and many other things. The king asked whether he had any merchandise with him. The captain replied that he had a little of each sort, as samples, and that if permitted to return to the ships he would order it to be landed, and that meantime four or five men would remain at the lodgings assigned them. The king said no! He might take all his people with him, securely moor his ships, land his merchandise, and sell it to the best advantage. Having taken leave of the king the captain returned to his lodgings, and we with him. As it was already late no attempt was made to depart that night.

3. The 16th century author, Fernao Lopes de Castanheda, in his *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses*, based on the near contemporary account *Relation attributed to Alvaro Velho*⁵⁵

[Gama convinced he was before an image of Virgin] went down on

his knees, and the others along with him, and they said their prayers. ...And Joao de Saa who had his doubts about whether that was really a Christian church, on seeing the ugliness of the images that were on the walls, said while going down on his knees: If this is the Devil, I worship the true God. And Vasco da Gama who heard him, looked at him smiling.



Chapter 10

Parsees, Jews, Christians

- A. Parsees
- B. Jews
- C. The legend of Prester John
- D. The St. Thomas tradition

A. PARSEES

Parsees in India, Friar Jordanus¹

There be also other pagan-folk in this India who worship fire; they bury not their dead, neither do they burn them, but cast them into the midst of a certain roofless tower, and there expose them totally uncovered to the fowls of heaven. These believe in two First Principles, to wit, of Evil and of Good, of Darkness and of Light, matters which at present I do not purpose to discuss.

B. JEWS

Jews, the Spanish Jew, Benjamin of Tudela²

All the cities and countries inhabited by these people contain only about one hundred Jews, who are of black colour as well as the other inhabitants. The Jews are good men, observers of the law, and possess the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and some little knowledge of the Thalmud and its decisions.

C. THE LEGEND OF PRESTER JOHN

1. **Otto von Freising writing around 1145 A.D. in the first reference to the Indian priest-king³**

A certain John, who lives beyond Persia and Armenia in the Far East, is

Christian along with his people.

2. Emperor Sigismund, at the close of the Middle Ages, on the issue of the priest-king⁴

...a priest is Emperor in India, where none can become Emperor unless he is a priest.

3. Friar Odoric, the last medieval traveller to place Prester John in Asia⁵

...as regards [the Prester] not one hundredth part is true of what is told of him.

4. The missionary, Francesco Alvarez, described the orders by King John to Pedro Covilham and Alfonso de Payva to find the country of Prester John⁶

When Peter de Covillan was returned, the king John called him and told him secretly, that having always knowne him loyal and his faithfull servant, and readie to doe his majestie good service; seeing he understood the Arabic tongue; he purposed to send him with another companion to discover and learne where Prete Janni dwelt, and whether his territories reached into the sea; and where the pepper and cinnamon grew, and other sorts of spicerie which were brought unto the citie of Venice from the countries of the Moores...And so in the year 1487, the 7th of May, they were both dispatched...

D. THE ST. THOMAS TRADITION

1. Isidore of Seville on St. Thomas [c. 638 A.D.]⁷

This Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, and to the Indians of the Oriental region and penetrating the innermost regions and sealing his preaching by his passion he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina, a city of India, and there was buried with honour...

2. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle on the tradition of St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew's apostolate in India [A.D. 883]⁸

This year went the army up the Scheldt to Conde, and there sat a year. And Pope Marinus sent King Alfred the *Lignum domni*. The same year led Sighelm and Athelstan to Rome the alms which King Alfred ordered thither, and also in India to St. Thomas and to St. Bartholomew. Then they sat against the army at London; and there, with favour of God, they were very successful after the performances of their vows.

3. William of Malmesbury on the St. Thomas Tradition [A.D. 1114-1123]⁹

Ever intent on almsgiving, he confirmed the privileges of the churches as appointed by his father and sent many presents overseas to Rome and St. Thomas in India. Sighelm, Bishop of Sherborne sent an ambassador for this purpose, who penetrated successfully into India... Returning thence, he brought back many brilliant exotic gems and aromatic juices in which that country abounds.

4. Saint Thomas, Marco Polo¹⁰

In this province of Maabar is the body of the glorious martyr, Saint Thomas the Apostle, who there suffered martyrdom. It rests in a small city, not frequented by many merchants, because unsuited to the purposes of their commerce; but, from devout motives, a vast number both of Christians and Saracens resort thither. The latter regard him as a great prophet, and name him Ananias, signifying a holy personage. The Christians who perform this pilgrimage collect earth from the spot where he was slain, which is of a red colour, and reverentially carry it away with them; often employing it afterwards in the performance of miracles, and giving it, when diluted with water, to the sick, by which many disorders are cured.

5. The kingdom of Mobar, where lieth the body of St. Thomas, Odoric of Pordenone¹¹

From this realm is a journey of ten days to another realm which is called Mobar [the Arabic name Ma'abar, the passage or ferry, was probably a corruption of Marawar, the name of the Hindu state which adjoined Adam's Bridge] and this is very great, and hath under it many cities and towns. And in this realm is laid the body of the Blessed Thomas the Apostle. His church is filled with idols, and beside it are some fifteen houses of the Nestorians, that is to say Christians, but vile and pestilent heretics.

6. St. Thomas at Malabar, Nicolo Conti¹²

Proceeding onwards the said Nicolo arrived at a maritime city which is named Malepur, situated in the Second Gulf beyond the Indus [the Bay of Bengal]. Here the body of Saint Thomas lies honourably buried in a very large and beautiful church: it is worshipped by heretics, who are called Nestorians, and inhabit this city to the number of a thousand. These Nestorians are scattered over all India, in like manner as are the Jews among us. All this province is called Malabar.



Chapter 11

Muslim Invaders

- A. Early expeditions unsuccessful
- B. Conquest of Multan and Sindh
- C. Subuktigin's invasions
- D. Some conquests of Mahmud of Ghazni
- E. Tilak the Hindu
- F. Ahmad Nialtigin at Banaras
- G. Muhammad Ghori
- H. Bhaktiyar Khalji
- I. Timur

Note. An Arab pillaging expedition visited Thana [near Bombay] as early as A.D. 637, during the reign of the second Caliph, Omar. More raids followed on the Indian coast. As part of a forward policy, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, al-Hajjaj [694-714], sent his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad bin Qasim, a young lad of seventeen, to annex the region from Sindh to Transoxiana. Sindh was then ruled by Raja Dahir, son the Brahmin, Chach.

Qasim first laid siege to Dabul, an inland commercial port near modern Karachi. Dahir's garrison offered stiff resistance, but, faced with heavy bombardment, was forced to capitulate. Dahir's sister rallied the women, who, to save themselves from dishonour, set their house ablaze and perished in the flames. Another battle was fought at Brahmanabad in June 712, in which Dahir was killed. This opened the way to Multan, the chief city of the upper Indus which was captured after a siege. The Arab invasion was not followed by a further thrust into the subcontinent for the Arabs had attacked from the wrong quarter. The great Thar Desert blocked Islamic expansion into the subcontinent.

It was only several centuries later, under the Turks, that Islamic power advanced in the subcontinent. In A.D. 962, Alptagin, a Turk who began his

career as a military slave, established himself as Governor of Ghazni, in Afghanistan. His son-in-law and successor, Subuktigin, annexed large parts of Afghanistan and became the first of the Ghaznavid Turkic rulers of Afghanistan. He was also the first Muslim to attempt the invasion of India from the north-west. His adversary was the Hindu Shahi ruler, Jaipal, whose territory extended from Lamghan to the river Chenab and from the hills of southern Kashmir to the frontier kingdom of Multan. Subuktigin engaged in several military encounters with Jaipal in the Kabul valley, but could not subdue him. Nonetheless, he had shown the way to Hindustan.

The major expansion of the Islamic realm began with his son, Mahmud Ghaznavi, who, between A.D. 1000 and 1026, led no less than sixteen campaigns to India. Mahmud first attacked the frontier towns of the Khaibar pass. Jaipal endeavoured in vain to save Peshawar. He, along with fifteen of his relatives, was brought as captive before the conqueror. Their costly necklaces were torn off and immense booty taken. Jaipal was released from captivity, but, unable to bear the disgrace, cast himself upon a funeral pyre.

In his campaign of A.D. 1008, Mahmud found ranged against him the rajas of Punjab supported by allies from other parts of India. They were led by Jaipal's son, Anandpal. Mahmud had never encountered such an army. A lucky accident tilted the scales in his favour in the battle of Waihind.

In subsequent years, Mahmud kept up his attack. Kangra [Nagarkot], Mathura, Kanauj, Gwalior, Kalinjar, and, in A.D. 1025-26, the famous temple of Somnath bore the brunt of his fervour. His victory at Somnath made him a hero in the Islamic world.

The kingdom Mahmud founded survived for a century and a half after his death, but diminished every decade. The Ghaznavids retained their hold over a small region around Lahore, Punjab being the only part of India they had annexed.

There was a considerable interval before the next series of invasions commenced with Muhammad Ghori [1173-1206] in the late twelfth century. The Ghurids, unlike the Ghaznavids, desired annexation of territory. Their two most formidable adversaries were Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer and Jayachand Gahadvala of Kanauj. Muhammad Ghori himself led the campaigns against the two rulers. He was badly wounded in 1191 in the battle at Tarain against Prithviraj Chauhan. Never had the armies of Islam been so worsted in the subcontinent. Muhammad Ghori, however, returned the following year, and his success at the second battle of Tarain marked the beginning of Turkic rule in India. This was followed in 1194, with his victory over Jayachand Gahadvala in the battle of Chandawar.

Several other campaigns were led by his Turkish slave, Qutubuddin Aibak, while a military adventurer, Bakhtiyar Khalji attacked Bihar as far as

the Buddhist university of Odantapuri, where he slaughtered the monks and seized the town. In 1204-1205, he attacked Nadia, one of the capitals of the Bengal ruler, Lakshmansena. His forays in the Assam region ended in disaster. In 1206 the Delhi Sultanate was established.

A. EARLY EXPEDITIONS UNSUCCESSFUL

Expedition to Thana, Al Biladhuri¹

Ali, son of Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abu Saif, has related that the Khalif 'Umar, son of Al Khattab appointed Usman, son of Abu-l Asi of the tribe of Sakif to Bahrain and Uman in the year 15 H. (636 A.D.) Usman sent his brother Hakam to Bahrain, and he himself went to Uman, and despatched an army to Tana [Thana]. When the army returned he wrote to the Khalif Umar to inform him of it. Umar wrote in, reply: "O brother of Sakif, thou has placed the worm in the wood but I swear by the God, that if our men had been killed I would taken (slain) an equal number from your tribe." Hakam dispatched a force to Barauz [Broach]; he also sent to the bay of Debal his brother Mughira, who met and defeated the enemy.

When 'Usman, son of Akkan become Khalif, he appointed Abdullah, son of Amar, son of Kuraiz to [the government of] Irak and wrote to him an order to send a person to the confines of Hind in order to acquire knowledge and bring back information. He accordingly deputed Hakim, son of Jaballa al 'Abdi. When this men returned he was sent on to the Khalif, who questioned him about the state of those regions. He replied that he knew them because he had examined them. The Khalif then told him to describe them. He said, "Water is scarce, the fruits are poor, and the robbers are bold; if few troops are sent there they will be slain, if many, they will starve." Usman asked him whether he spoke accurately or hyperbolically. He said that he spoke according to his knowledge. The Khalif abstained from sending any expedition there.

At the end of the year 38, or the beginning of the year 39 H. (659 A.D.) in the Khalifat of Ali, son of Abu Salib, Haras, the son of Marra-I Abdi went with the sanction of the Khalif to the same frontier, as a volunteer. He was victorious, got plunder, made captives, and distributed in one day a thousand heads. He and those who were with him, saving a few, were slain in the land of Kikan in the year 42 H. (662 A.D.) Kikan is in Sind near the frontiers of Khurasan.

In the year 44 H. (664. A.D.), and in the days of the Khalif Mu'awiya, Muhallab, son of Abu Safra made war upon the same frontier, and advanced as far as Banna and Alahwar, which lie between Multan and Kabul. The enemy opposed him and killed him and his followers. In the land of Kikan, Muhallab

encountered eighteen Turki horsemen, riding crop-tailed horses. They fought well but were all slain. Muhallab said, "How much more active than we those barbarians were." So he docked the tails of his horses, and was the first among the Muslims who did so.

In the reign of Mu'awiya, son of Abu Sufain, the Amir Abdullah, son of Amir, or according to some, Mu'awiya himself sent Abdullah, son of Suar al 'Abdi, to the frontier of Hind. He fought in Kikan and captured booty. Then he came to Mu'awiya and presented to him some Kikan horses...

In the reign of the same Mu'awiya, the Chief Ziyad, son of Abu Sufian, appointed Sinan, son of Salama, son of al Muhabbak the Huzaili (to the command). He was a good, and godly man, and the first who made his troops take an oath of divorce. He proceeded to the frontier and having subdued Makran and its cities by force, he staid there, and established his power in the country. According to Ibn al Kalbi, it was Hakim bin Jabala al 'Abdi who conquered Makran.

Ziyad then appointed Rashid son of Umru-l Judaidi of the tribe of Azd to the frontier. He proceeded to Makran and was victorious in warring against Kikan; but he was slain fighting against the Meds. Sinan, son of Salama, then succeeded to the command and was confirmed therein by Ziyad. He remained there two years.

'Abbad, son of Ziyad, then made war on the frontier of Hind by way of Sijistan. He went to Sanaruz, from whence he proceeded by way of Khaz to Ruzbar in Sijistan on the banks of the Hind-mand. Then he descended to Kish, and crossing the desert came to Kandahar. He fought the inhabitants, routed them, put them to flight and subdued the country; but many Muslims perished. 'Abbad observed the high caps of the people of that country, and had some made like them, which he called Abbadiya.

Ziyad next appointed Al Manzar, son of Al Jarud al Abdi, to the frontiers of India. He was known by the name of Abu-l Ash'as. He attacked and conquered Nukan and Kikan. The Muslims obtained great plunder, and their forces spread over all the country. He captured Kusdar and took prisoners there. Sinan had previously taken it, but its inhabitants had been guilty of defection. He died there (in Kuzdar).

The governor Ubaidullah, son of Ziyad, then appointed Ibn Harri al Bahali. God, by his hands, subdued these countries, for he waged fierce war on them and conquered and plundered them. Some writers say that it was Sinan, son of Salama, who was appointed to the (chief) command by Ubaidullah and that Harri led the forces.

The people of Nukan are now Muhammadans. Amran, son of Musa, son of Yahya, son of Khalid the Barmakide, built a city there in the Khalifat of M'utasim bi-llah which he called Al Baiza (the white). When al Hajjaj, son of

Yusuf, son of al Hakim, son of Abu 'Akail al Sakifi, was governor of Irak, Said, son of Aslam, son of Zura'a al Kalabi was appointed to Makran and its frontiers. He was opposed and slain there by Mu'awiya and Muhammad, sons of al Haras al 'Alafi.

Hajjaj then appointed Mujja', son of S'ir al Tamimi to the frontier. He made war upon, plundered and defeated the tribes about Kanda-bil, and this conquest was subsequently completed by Muhammad, son of al Kasim. Mujja' died in Makran after being there a year.

After the death of Mujja', Hajjaj appointed in his place Muhammad, son of Harun, son of Zara al Namari. Under the government of Muhammad, the king of the Isle of Rubies [Ceylon] sent as a present to Hajjaj, certain Muhammadan girls who had been born in his country, the orphan daughters of merchants who had died there. The king hoped by this measure to ingratiate himself with Hajjaj; but the ship in which he had embarked these girls was attacked and taken by some barks (*bawarij*) belonging to the Meds of Debal. One of the women of the tribe of Yarbu exclaimed, 'Oh Hajjaj!' When this news reached Hajjaj, he replied, 'I am here.' He then sent an ambassador to Dahir to demand their release, but Dahir replied, "They are pirates who have captured these women, and over them I have no authority." Then Hajjaj sent Ubaidullah, son of Nabhan, against Debal. Ubaidullah being killed, Hajjaj wrote to Budail, son of Tahfa, of the tribe of Bajali, who was at 'Uman, directing him to proceed to Debal. When he arrived there his horse took fright (and threw him), and the enemy surrounded him and killed him. Some authors say he was killed by the Jats of Budha...

Afterwards, Hajjaj, during the Khilafat of Walid, son of 'Abdul malik appointed Muhammad, son of Kasim, son of Muhammail, son of Hakim, son of Abu 'Ukail to command on the Sindian frontier. Muhammad was in Fars when the order arrived, and had previously received instructions to go to Rai [south of the Caspian Sea]. Abu-l Aswad Jahm, son of Zahru-l Ju'fi, was at the head of the advanced guard, and he was ordered to return to Muhammad, and he joined him on the orders of Sind. Hajjaj ordered six thousand Syrian warriors to attend Muhammad, and others besides. He was provided with all he could require, without omitting even thread and needles. He had leave to remain at Shiraz until all the men who were to accompany him had assembled, and all the preparations had been duly made. Hajjaj had some dressed cotton saturated with strong vinegar, and then dried it in the shade, and said, "When you arrive in Sind, if you find the vinegar scarce, soak the cotton in water, and with the water you can cook your food and season your dishes as you wish." Some authors say, that when Muhammad arrived on the frontiers, he wrote to complain of the scarcity of vinegar, and this was the reason which induced Hajjaj to send cotton soaked in vinegar.

Then Muhammad, son of Kasim went to Makran, and remained there some time. He then went to Kannazbur and took it, and then to Armail, which he also took. Muhammad, son of Harun, son of Zara, went to meet him, and joined him, but he died near Armail at Kasim's side, and was buried at Kambal [Kambali?].

B. CONQUEST OF MULTAN AND SINDH, AL- BILADURI²

Muhammad, son of Kasim, left Armial, accompanied by Jahm, the son of Zahru-l Ju'fi, and arrived at Debal on Friday, where ships brought to him a supply to men, arms, and warlike machines. He dug an entrenchment which he defended with spearmen, and unfurled his standards; each body of warriors was arrayed under its own banner, and he fixed the manjanik, which was called 'the bride,' and required five hundred men to work it. There was at Debal a lofty temple, (*budd*) surmounted by a long pole, and on the pole was fixed a red flag, which when the breeze blew was unfurled over the city. The *budd* is a high steeple, below which the idol, or idols, are deposited as in this instance. The Indians give in general the name of *budd* to anything connected with their worship or which forms the object of their veneration. So an idol is called *budd*.

In the correspondence which ensued, Muhammad informed Hajjaj of what he had done, and solicited advice respecting the future. Letters were written every three days. One day a reply was received to this effect:—"Fix the manjanik and shorten its foot, and place it on the east; you will then call the manjanik-master, and tell him to aim at the flag staff, of which you have given a description." So he brought down the flagstaff, and it was broken; at which the infidels were sore afflicted. The idolaters advanced to the combat, but were, put to flight; ladders were then brought and the Musulmans escaladed the wall. The first who gained the summit was a man of Kufa, of the tribe of Murad. The town was thus taken by assault, and the carnage endured for three days. The governor of the town, appointed by Dahir fled, and the priests of the temple were massacred. Muhammad marked out a place for the Musulmans to dwell in, build a mosque, and left four thousand Musulmans to garrison the place.

Muhammad, son of Yahya, says that Mansur, the son of Hatim, the grammarian, a freeman of the family of Khalid, son of Assaid, relates that he had seen the pole broken into fragments which had been placed on the steeple of the temple. 'Amibissa, son of Ishak Az Zabbi, the governor of Sind, in the Khalifat of Mu'tasim billah, knocked down the upper part of the temple and converted it into a prison. At the same time he began to repair the ruined town

with the stones of the minaret; but before he had completed his labours, he was deprived of his employment, and was succeeded by Harun, son of Abi Khalid-al Maruruzi, and he was slain there.

Muhammed, son of Kasim then went to Nirun, the inhabitants of which place had already sent two Samanis, or priests, of their town to Hajjaj to treat for peace. They furnished Muhammad with supplies, and admitting him to enter the town, they were allowed to capitulate. Muhammad conquered all the towns successively which he met on his route, until he had crossed a river which runs on this side of the Mihran [Indus]. He then saw approaching towards him Sarbidas, the Samani, who came to demand peace in the name of the inhabitants. Muhammad imposed tribute upon them, and then went towards Sahban, and took it. Then he went to the banks of the Mihran, and there remained. When this news reached Dahir, he prepared for battle. Muhammad, son of Kasim, had sent Muhammad, son of Musab, son of Abdu-r Rahman as Sakifi, to Sadusan, with men mounted on horses and asses, at whose approach the inhabitants solicited quarter and peace, the terms of which were negotiated by the Samani. Muhammad granted them peace, but he imposed tribute on the place, and took pledges from them, and then returned to his master. He brought with him four thousand Jats, and left at Sadusan an officer in command.

Muhammad sought the means of crossing the Mihran, and effected the passage in a place which adjoined the dominions of Rasil, chief of Kassa, in Hind, upon a bridge which he had caused to be constructed. Dahir had neglected every precaution, not believing that the Musulmans would dare to advance so far. Muhammad and his Musulmans encountered Dahir mounted on his elephant, and surrounded by many of these animals, and his Takakaras [Thakurs] were near his person. A dreadful conflict ensued, such as had never been heard of. Dahir dismounted and fought valiantly, but he was killed towards the evening, when the idolater fled, and the Musulmans glutted themselves with massacre. According to Al Madaini, the slayer of Dahir was a man of the tribe of Kalab, who composed some verses upon the occasion...

Various authors concur in saying that Muhammad took the village of Rawar by assault, in which city there was a wife of Dahir, who, afraid of being captured, burned herself along with her handmaids and all that she possessed.

Then Muhammad, son of Kasim, went to old Brahmanabad, two parasangs from Manama, which town indeed did not then exist, its site being a forest. The remnant of the army of Dahir rallied at Brahmanabad and resistance being made, Muhammad was obliged to resort to force, when eight, or as some say, twenty-six thousand men were put to the sword. He left a prefect there. The place is now in ruins.

Muhammad then marched towards Alrur and Baghrur. The people of Sawandari came out to meet him and sued for peace, which was granted them,

on the condition that they should entertain the Muhammadans and furnish guides. At this time they profess the Muhammadan creed. After that he went to Basmad, where the inhabitants obtained peace on the same terms as those accorded to the Sawandrians. At last he reached Alrur; one of the cities of Sind. It is situated on a hill. Muhammad besieged it for several months, and compelled it to surrender promising to spare the lives of the inhabitants and not touch the temples (*budd*). ‘The temples’ he said, “shall be unto us, like all the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire temples of the Magians.” He imposed, however, the tribute upon the inhabitants, and built a mosque in the city.

Muhammad advanced to Alsaka, a town on this side of the Biyas, which was captured by him, and is now in ruins. He then crossed the Biyas, and went towards Multan, where, in the action which ensued, Zaida, the son of Umur, of the tribe of Tai, covered himself with glory. The infidels retreated in disorder into the town, and Muhammad commenced the siege, but the provisions being exhausted, the Musulmans were reduced to eat asses. Then came there forward a man who sued for quarter, and pointed out to them an aqueduct, by which the inhabitants were supplied with drinking water from the river of Basmad. It flowed within the city into a reservoir like a well, which they call *talah*. Muhammad destroyed the watercourse; upon which the inhabitants, oppressed with thirst, surrendered at discretion. He massacred the men capable of bearing arms, but the children were taken captive, as well as the ministers of the temple, to the number of six thousand. The Musulmans found there much gold in a chamber ten cubits long by eight broad, and there was an aperture above, through which the gold was poured into the chamber. Hence, they call Multan “the Frontier of the House of Gold,” for *farj* means ‘a frontier.’ The temple (*budd*) of Multan received rich presents and offerings, and to it the people of Sind resorted as a place of pilgrimage. They circumambulated it, and shaved their heads and beards. They conceived that the image was that of the prophet Job – God’s peace be on him!...

Hakim, son of ‘Awana al Kalbi, succeeded Tamim. The people of India had returned to idolatry excepting those of Kassa, and the Musulmans had no place of security in which they could take refuge, so he built a town on the other side of the lake facing India, and called it Al Mahfuzza, ‘the secure,’ and this he made a place of refuge and security for them, and their chief town. He asked the elders of the tribe of Kalb, who were of Syrian descent, what name he should give the town. Some said Dimashk [Damascus], others, Hims [Emessa], and other Tadmur [Palmyra]. Hakim said (to the latter), “May God destroy you, O fool.” He gave it the name of Al Mahfuzza, and dwelt there...

The Khalifal Mansur sent to Sind Hasham, son of ‘Amru al Taghlabi, and he reduced those places which still held out. He sent ‘Amru, son of Jamal, in

boats to Narand. He also sent (a force) to the territories of Hind, subdued Kashmir, and took many prisoners and slaves. Sultan was reduced, and he overpowered a body of Arabs who were in Kandabil, and drove them out. He then went to Kandahar in boats, and conquered it. He destroyed the *budd* there, and built in its place a mosque. There was abundance in the country under his rule, and the people blessed him – he extended the frontier, and enforced his decrees...

Musa died in 221 A.H. (836 A.D.), leaving a high reputation, and he appointed his son Amran as his successor. The Khalif Mu'tasim bi-llah wrote to him confirming him in the government of the frontier. He marched to Kikan against the Jats, whom he defeated and subjugated. He built a city there, which he called Al Baiza, 'the white,' and he posted a military force there. Then he proceeded to Multan, and from thence to Kandabil which city stands upon a hill. Muhammad, the son of Khalil, was reigning there, but Amran slew him, conquered the town, and carried away its inhabitants to Kusdar. Then he made war upon the Meds, and killed three thousand of them. There he constructed a *band*, which is called 'Sakru-l Med,' *Band of the Meds*. He encamped on the river at Alrur. There he summoned the Jats, who came to his presence, when he sealed their hands, took from them the *jizya*, and he ordered that every man of them should bring a dog with him when he came to wait upon him, – hence the price upon a dog rose to fifty dirhams. He again attacked the Meds, having with him the chief men of the Jats. He dug a canal from the sea to their tank, so their water became salt; and he sent out several marauding expeditions against them...

Abu Bakr, who had been a slave of the Karizis, related to me that the country called Al 'Usaifan between Kashmir and Multan and Kabul, was governed by a wise king. The people of this country worshipped an idol for which they had built a temple. The son of the king fell sick, and he desired the ministers of the temple to pray to the idol for the recovery of his son. They retired for a short time, and then returned and said, "We have prayed and our supplications have been accepted." But no long time passed before the youth died. Then the king attacked the temple, destroyed and broke in pieces the idol, and slew its ministers. He afterwards invited a party of Muhammadan traders who made known to him the unity of God. Hereupon he believed in the unity and became a Musulman. This happened in the Khalifat of Mu'tasim bi-llah, may God have mercy on him.

C. AMIR SUBUKTIGIN'S INVASIONS

1. Subuktigin's first invasion of Hind, Al Utbi³

...he made frequent expeditions into Hind, in the prosecution of holy wars... When Jaipal had ascertained the calamity which had befallen him from

the reports of the people who travelled in his country, and how Subuktigin was taking different parts of the territory into his own possession, and injuring everybody who opposed him in his projects of ambition the deepest grief seized him and made him restless, and his lands became narrow under his feet, though their expanse was broad. Then he arose with his relations and the generals of his army, and his vassals, and hastened with his huge elephants to wreak his revenge upon Subuktigin, by treading the field of Islam under his feet, and doing dishonour to that which should be treated with respect. In this disposition he marched on until he passed Lamghan, and approached the territory of Subuktigin, trusting to his own resources and power, for Satan had laid an egg in Jaipal's brain and hatched it; so that he waxed proud, entertaining absurd thoughts, and anticipating an immediate accomplishment of his wishes, impracticable as they were.

When the Amir heard of Jaipal's approach towards his territory, and of his great power, he girt up his loins to fight, and collecting his vassals and the Muhammadan forces whose duty it was to oppose infidels, he advanced from Ghazna against Jaipal, who was encamped between that place and Lamghan, with soldiers as black as night, and as impetuous as a torrent. Yaminu-d daula Mahmud accompanied Amir Subuktigin, like a lion of the forest or a destructive eagle, and they attempted no difficult undertaking which they did not easily accomplish.

The armies fought several days successively against each other, and cups filled to the brim with blood, drawn from wounds inflicted by sword and spear, circulated amongst them till they were drunken...

In consequence of the great fear which fell upon Jaipal, who confessed he had seen death before the appointed time, he sent a deputation to the Amir soliciting peace, on the promise of his paying down a sum of money, and offering to obey any order he might receive respecting his elephants and his country. The Amir Subuktigin consented on account of the mercy he felt towards those who were his vassals, or for some other reason which seemed expedient to him. But the Sultan Yaminu-d daula Mahmud addressed the messengers in a harsh voice, and refused to abstain from battle, until he should obtain a complete victory suited to his zeal for the honour of Islam and of Musulmans, and one which he was confident God would grant to his arms. So they returned, and Jaipal being in great alarm, again sent most humble supplications that the battle might cease, observing, "You have seen the impetuosity of the Hindus and their indifference to death, whenever any calamity befalls them, as at this moment. If, therefore, you refuse to grant peace in the hope of obtaining plunder, tribute, elephants and prisoners, then there is no alternative for us but to mount the horse of stern determination, destroy our property, take out the eyes of our elephants, cast our children into

the fire, and rush on each other with sword and spear, so that all that will be left to you, is stones and dirt, dead bodies, and scattered bones."

When the Amir heard these words and knew what Jaipal would do in his despair, he thought that religion and the views of the faithful would best be consulted by peace, and the acquisition of tribute. So the Amir Mahmud agreed with Subuktigin as to the propriety of withdrawing the hand of vengeance, on the condition of receiving at that time 1,000,000 dirhams of royal stamp, and fifty elephants, and some cities and forts in the middle of his country. Jaipal was to deliver these forts to the officers nominated by the Amir, and was to send hostages from among his relatives and friends to remain with the Amir until these conditions of cession were fulfilled. The Amir sent two deputies with Jaipal to see that he did not swerve from his engagements, and they were accompanied by confidential officers who were to receive charge of the ceded places.

When Jaipal had marched to a great distance, and thought that the demand upon him had relaxed, and that the rope round his throat was loosened, his bad disposition suggested to him to break his engagements, and his folly made him beget enmity, insomuch that he imprisoned those who accompanied him on the part of the Amir, in reprisal for those of his relations whom the Amir had taken as hostages.

2. Amir Subuktigin's second invasion of Hind, Al-Utbi⁴

...The Amir marched out towards Lamghan, which is a city celebrated for its great strength and abounding in wealth. He conquered it and set fire to the places in its vicinity which were inhabited by infidels, and demolishing the idol-temples, he established Islam in them. He marched and captured other cities and killed the polluted wretches, destroying the idolatrous and gratifying the Musulmans. After wounding and killing beyond all measure, his hands and those of his friends became cold in counting the value of the plundered property. On the completion of his conquest he returned and promulgated accounts of the victories obtained for Islam, and everyone, great and small, concurred in rejoicing over this result and thanking God...

D. SOME CONQUESTS OF MAHMUD OF GHAZNI

1. Defeat of Jaipal by Mahmud of Ghazni, Al-Utbi⁵

Sultan Mahmud at first designed in his heart to go to Sijistan, but subsequently preferred engaging previously in a holy war against Hind...On his reaching Purshaur (Peshawar), he pitched his tent outside the city. There he received intelligence of the bold resolve of Jaipal, the enemy of God, and

the King (malik) of Hind, to offer opposition, and of his rapid advance towards meeting his fate in the field of battle...

Swords flashed like lightning amid the blackness of clouds, and fountains of blood flowed like the fall of setting stars. The friends of God defeated their obstinate opponents, and quickly put them to a complete rout. Noon had not arrived when the Musulmans had wreaked their vengeance on the infidel enemies of God, killing 15,000 of them, spreading them like a carpet over the ground, and making them food for beasts and birds of prey. Fifteen elephants fell on the field of battle, as their legs, being pierced with arrows, became as motion-less as if they had been in a quagmire, and their trunks were cut with the swords of the valiant heroes.

The enemy of God, Jaipal, and his children and grandchildren, and nephews, and the chief men of his tribe, and his relatives, were taken prisoners, and being strongly bound with ropes, were carried before the Sultan, like as evildoers, on whose faces the fumes of infidelity are evident, who are covered with the vapours of misfortune, will be bound and carried to Hell. Some had their arms forcibly tied behind their backs, some were seized by the cheek, some were driven by blows on the neck. The necklace was taken off the neck of Jaipal, – composed of large pearls and shining gems and rubies set in gold, of which the value was two hundred thousand dinars; and twice that value was obtained from the necks of those of his relatives who were taken prisoners, or slain, and had become the food of the mouths of hyenas and vultures. God also bestowed upon his friends such an amount of booty as was beyond all bounds and all calculation, including five hundred thousand slaves, beautiful men and women....

After the victory, the Sultan directed that the polluted infidel, Jaipal, should be paraded about, so that his sons and chieftains might see him in that condition of shame, bonds, and disgrace; and that the fear of Islam might fly abroad through the country of the infidels. He then entered into conditions of peace with him, after demanding fifty elephants, and took from him as hostages his son and grandson, till he should fulfil the conditions imposed upon him.

The infidel returned to his own country and remained there, and wrote to his son, Andpal, whose territory, on which he prided himself, was on the other side of the Sihun (Indus), explaining the dreadful calamity which had befallen him, and beseeching him with many entreaties to send the elephants which were according to agreement to be given to the Sultan. Upon this Andpal sent the elephants to Jaipal, after dismissing the courier who had brought the letter, and the elephants were sent on to the Sultan. The Sultan, therefore, ordered the release of the hostages, and his myrmidons gave them a smack on the buttocks, telling them to return to their country.

Andpal reflected that his father, Jaipal, had put on the sheaf of old age, and had fallen under the influence of Lyra and other unlucky constellations,

and it was time he should contemplate his death and devote himself to religious exercises. There is a custom among these men that if anyone is taken prisoner by an enemy, as in this case Jaipal was by the Musulmans, it is not lawful for him to continue to reign. When Jaipal, therefore, saw that he was captive in the prison of old age and degradation, he thought death by cremation preferable to shame and dishonour. So he commenced with shaving his hair off, and then threw himself upon the fire till he was burnt.

2. The Hindu Shahis – men of noble bearing, Alberuni⁶

The Hindus had kings residing in Kabul, Turks who where said to be of Tibetan origin...

The last king of this race was *Lagaturman*, and his Vazir was Kallar, a Brahman.... Now the Vazir put him in chains and imprisoned him for correction, but then he himself found ruling sweet, his riches enabled him to carry out his plans, and so he occupied the royal throne. After him ruled the Brahman kings Samand (Samanta), Kamalu, Bhim (Bhima), Jaipal (Jayapala), Ananda-pala, Tarajanapala (Trilocanapala). The latter was killed A.H. 412 (A.D. 1021), and his son Bhimapala five year later (A.D. 1026).

This Hindu Shahiya dynasty is now extinct, and of the whole house there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that, in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of noble sentiment and noble bearing.

3. Conquest of Bhatia, *Kamilu-T Tawarikh*, Ibn Asir⁷

In the year 396 Hijra (1006 A.D.) Yaminu-d daula fought against Bhatia, one of the dependencies of Hind, which is situated beyond Multan. The chief of the place was named Bahira. It is a fine city, enclosed with high walls, and a deep ditch. The chief marched out to meet his enemy, and fought for three days with the Musulmans. On the fourth he fled, and sought to get back into the city; but the Musulmans reached the gate before the fugitives overpowered them, and disarmed them. A dreadful slaughter ensued, the women were dishonoured, and the property seized. When Bahira saw this destruction; he fled with some trusty followers to the tops of the mountains. Mahmud sent a force in pursuit, which overtook and surrounded the party, and put all the chiefs to the sword. Bahira saw that no hope was left, so he drew a dagger and killed himself. Mahmud remained in Bhatia until he had settled its affairs, and drawn up rules for its governance. He then returned towards Ghazna, having appointed a representative at Bhatia to instruct the people who had become Muhammadans. On his journey home he encountered great difficulties from heavy rains and swollen rivers, and great quantities of things belonging to him and his army were carried away by the waters.

4. Victory near Waihind, Al-Utbi⁸

The Sultan, contrary to the disposition of man, which induces him to prefer a soft to a hard couch, and the splendour of the cheeks of pomegranate-bosomed girls to well-tempered sword blades, was so offended at the standard which Satan had raised in Hind, that he determined on another holy expedition to that land. On the last day of Rabi'u-l-akhir of the same year, the Sultan prayed God for the accomplishment of his wishes. When he had reached as far as the river of Waihind, he was met by Brahmanpal, the son of Andpal, at the head of a valiant army, with white swords, blue spears, yellow coats of mail, and ash-coloured elephants. Fight opened its crooked teeth, attacks were frequent like flaming meteors, arrows fell like rain from bows, and the grinding-stone of slaughter revolved, crushing the bold and the powerful. The battle lasted from morning till evening, and the infidels were near gaining the victory, had not God aided by sending the slaves of the household to attack the enemy in rear, and put them to fight. The victors obtained thirty large elephants, and slew the vanquished wherever they were found in jungles, passes, plains, and hills.

5. Capture of Bhimnagar, Al-Utbi⁹

The Sultan himself joined in the pursuit, and went after them as far as the fort called Bhimnagar [Nagarkot, modern Kangra], which is very strong, situated on the promontory of a lofty hill, in the midst of impassable waters. The kings of Hind, the chiefs of that country, and rich devotees, used to amass their treasures and precious jewels, and send them time after time to be presented to the large idol that they might receive a reward for their good deeds and draw near to their God. So the Sultan advanced near to this crow's fruit [probably an allusion to the expression of the blackness of the Hindus], and this accumulation of years, which had attained such an amount that the backs of camels would not carry it, nor vessels contain it, nor writers' hands record it, nor the imagination of an arithmetician conceive it.

The Sultan brought his forces under the fort and surrounded it, and prepared to attack the garrison vigorously, boldly, and wisely. When the defenders saw the hills covered with the armies of plunderers, and the arrows ascending towards them like flaming sparks of fire, great fear came upon them, and, calling out for mercy, they opened the gates, and fell on the earth, like sparrows before a hawk, or rain before lightning. Thus did God grant an easy conquest of this fort to the Sultan, and bestowed on him as plunder the products of mines and seas, the ornaments of heads and breasts, to his heart's content. The Sultan entered the fort with Abu Nasr Ahmad bin Muhammad Farighuni, the ruler of Juzjan, and all his own private attendants, and appointed his two chief chamberlains, Altuntash and Asightigiu, to take charge of the treasures

of gold and silver and all the valuable property, while he himself took charge of the jewels. The treasures were laden on the backs of as many camels as they could procure, and the officers carried away the rest. The stamped coin amounted to seventy thousand thousand royal dirhams, and the gold and silver ingots amounted to seven hundred thousand four hundred *mans* in weight, besides wearing apparel and fine cloths of Sus, respecting which old men said they never remembered to have seen any so fine, soft, and embroidered. Among the booty was a house of white silver, like to the houses of rich men, the length of which was thirty yards and the breadth fifteen. It could be taken to pieces and put together again. And there was a canopy, made of the fine linen of Rum, forty yards long and twenty broad, supported on two golden and two silver poles, which had been cast in moulds.

The Sultan appointed one of his most confidential servants to the charge of the fort and the property in it. After this he returned to Ghazna in triumph; and, on his arrival there, he ordered the courtyard of his palace to be covered with a carpet, on which he displayed jewels and unbored pearls and rubies, shining like sparks, or like wine congealed with ice, and emeralds like fresh sprigs of myrtle, and diamonds in size and weight like pomegranates. Then ambassadors from foreign countries, including the envoy from Taghan Khan, king of Turkistan, assembled to see the wealth which they had never yet even read of in books of the ancients, and which had never been accumulated by kings of Persia or of Rum, or even by Karun who had only to express a wish and God granted it.

6. Conquest of Tanesar, Al-Utbi¹⁰

The Sultan learnt that in the country of Tanesar there were large elephants of the Sailaman breed, celebrated for military purposes. The chief of Tanesar was on this account obstinate in his infidelity and denial of God. So the Sultan marched against him with his valiant warriors, for the purpose of planting the standards of Islam and extirpating idolatry. He marched through a desert which no one had yet crossed, except birds and wild beasts, for the foot of man and the shoe of horse had not traversed it. There was no water in it, much less any other kind of food. The Sultan was the first to whom God had granted a passage over this desert, in order that he might arrive at the accomplishment of his wishes.

Beneath it (Tanesar) flowed a pure stream; the bottom was covered with large stones, and its banks were precipitous and sharp as the points of arrows. The Sultan had reached this river where it takes its course through a hill-pass, behind which the infidels had posted themselves, in the rear of their elephants, with a large number of infantry and cavalry. The Sultan adopted the stratagem of ordering some of his troops to cross the river by two different fords, and to

attack the enemy on both sides...

The blood of the infidels flowed so copiously, that the stream was discoloured, notwithstanding its purity, and people were unable to drink it. Had not night come on and concealed the traces of their flight, many more of the enemy would have been slain. The victory was gained by God's grace, who had established Islam for ever as the best of religions, notwithstanding that idolaters revolt against it. The Sultan returned with plunder which it is impossible to recount. — Praise be to God, the protector of the world, for the honour he bestows upon Islam and Musulmans!

7. Capture of Mathura, Al-Utbi¹¹

The Sultan then departed from the environs of the city, in which was a temple of the Hindus. The name of this place was Maharatu-l Hind. He saw there a building of exquisite structure, which the inhabitants said had been built, not by men, but by Genii, and there he witnessed practices contrary to the nature of man, and which could not be believed but from evidence of actual sight. The wall of the city was constructed of hard stone, and two gates opened upon the river flowing under the city, which were erected upon strong and lofty foundations, to protect them against the floods of the river and rains. On both sides of the city there were a thousand houses, to which idol temples were attached, all strengthened from top to bottom by rivets of iron, and all made of masonry work; and opposite to them were other buildings, supported on broad wooden pillars, to give them strength.

In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and firmer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted. The Sultan thus wrote respecting it : "If any should wish to construct a building equal to this, he would not be able to do it without expending an hundred thousand thousand red dinars, and it would occupy two hundred years, even though the most experienced and able workmen were employed." Among the idols there were five made of red gold, each five yards high, fixed in the air without support. In the eyes of one of these idols there were two rubies, of such value, that if anyone were to sell such as are like them, he would obtain fifty thousand dinars. On another, there was a sapphire purer than water, and more sparkling than crystal; the weight was four hundred and fifty miskals. The two feet of another idol weighed four thousand four hundred miskals, and the entire quantity of gold yielded by the bodies of these idols, was ninety-eight thousand three hundred miskals. The idols of silver amounted to two hundred, but they could not be weighed without breaking them to pieces and putting them into scales. The Sultan gave orders that all the temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire, and levelled with the ground.

8. The Conquest of Kanauj, Al-Utbi¹²

...The Sultan advanced to the fortifications of Kanauj, which consisted of seven distinct forts, washed by the Ganges, which flowed under them like the ocean. In Kanauj there were nearly ten thousand temples, which the idolaters falsely and absurdly represented to have been founded by their ancestors two or three hundred thousand years ago. They worshipped and offered their vows and supplications to them, in consequence of their great antiquity. Many of the inhabitants of the place fled and were scattered abroad like so many wretched widows and orphans, from the fear which oppressed them, in consequence of witnessing the fate of their deaf and dumb idols. Many of them thus effected their escape, and those who did not fly were put to death. The Sultan took all seven forts in one day, and gave his soldiers leave to plunder them and take prisoners.

9. Mahmud's conquests ruined India, Alberuni¹³

Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards and Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources.

10. Mahmud the first Muhammadan king to receive title of Sultan from the Khalifa, Ibn Asir¹⁴

Sultan Mahmud was a great monarch. He was the first Muhammadan king who received the title of Sultan from the Khalif. He was born on the night of Thursday, the tenth of Muharram, A.H. 361 (2nd October, 971), in the seventh year after the time of Bilkatigin. A moment (*sa'at*) before his birth, Amir Subuktigin saw in a dream that a tree sprang up from the fireplace in the midst of his house, and grew so high that it covered the whole world with its shadow. Waking in alarm from his dream, he began to reflect upon the import of it. At that very moment a messenger came, bringing the tidings that the Almighty had given him a son. Subuktigin greatly rejoiced, and said, I name the child Mahmud. On the same night that he was born, an idol temple in India, in the vicinity of Parshawar, on the banks of the Sind, fell down.

Mahmud was a man of great abilities, and is renowned as one of the greatest champions of Islam. He ascended the throne in Balkh, in the year 387 H. (997 A.D.), and received investiture by the Khalifa Al Kadir bi-llah. His

influence upon Islam soon became widely known, for he converted as many as a thousand idol-temples into mosques, subdued the cities of Hindustan, and vanquished the Rais of that country. He captured Jaipal, who was the greatest of them, kept him at Yazd (?), in Khurasan, and gave orders so that he was bought for eighty dirams. He led his armies to Nahrwala and Gujarat, carried off the idol (*manat*) from Somnat, and broke it into four parts. One part he deposited in the Jami Masjid of Ghazni, one he placed at the entrance of the royal palace, the third he sent to Mecca, and the fourth to Medina. Unsuri composed a long *Kasida* on this victory.

E. TILAK THE HINDU, ABU-L FAZL AL BAIHAKI¹⁵

This Tilak was the son of a barber, but he was handsome in face and appearance, and had an eloquent tongue. He wrote an excellent hand, both in Hindi and Persian. He had lived a long time in Kashmir, where he studied and acquired some proficiency in dissimulation, amours, and witchcraft. From thence he came to Kazi Shiraz Bu-l Hasan, who was captivated by him, for every great man who saw him was enamoured of him. The Kazi restrained him from going anywhere else; but Tilak contrived by stratagem to have his case, and the iniquity of which the Kazi was capable, reported to the great Khwaja Ahmad Hasan (May God be pleased with him). There was ill-feeling between the Khwaja and the Kazi. The Khwaja sent royal orders with three peons, and to the great disgust of the Kazi they brought Tilak to the court. Khwaja Ahmad Hasan heard what he had to say, saw the way clear before him, and took measures to have the matter brought to the notice of Amir Mahmud in such a manner that he did not know the Khwaja had contrived the means. The Amir ordered the Khwaja to hear Tilak's complaint, and the Kazi fell into great difficulty.

After this event Tilak became one of the great confidants of the Khwaja. He was made his secretary and interpreter between him and the Hindus. Thus he acquired great influence in the minister's court, where I, says Bu-l Fazi, used to see him standing before the Khwaja, doing the duties of a secretary and interpreter, and carrying and bringing messages, and managing difficult affairs. When that trouble fell on the Khwaja, which I have before mentioned, Amir Mahmud called together his servants and secretaries, in order that he might appoint the most clever to offices in his court. Tilak met with his approval, and was associated as interpreter with Bahram. He was a young man and a clever speaker. Amir Mahmud wanted such persons. His fortune thus improved. Secretly he rendered valuable services to Sultan Masud, that is, he brought all the Hindu Kators and many outsiders under his rule, and he

obtained honour from such a great king as Mahmud.

When Shah Masud arrived in Balkh from Hirat and the affairs of the country were settled, Sundar, the general of the Hindus, was not in his place. He therefore promoted Tilak, and granted him a gold embroidered robe, hung a jewelled necklace of gold round his neck, and placed an army under him. Thus he obtained the name of man. A tent and an umbrella were also given to him. Kettle drums were beaten at his quarters, according to the custom of the Hindu chiefs, and banners with gilded tops were granted. Fortune befriended him; he was elevated to such a degree as to sit among the nobles in the privy councils, and as I have said, he was employed in important duties, until at length he undertook the command against Ahmad Nialtigin. His luck and fortune aided him, and carried him through. The Arabs say, "There is a cause for everything, and men must seek it." Wise men do not wonder at such facts, because nobody is born great – men become such. But it is important that they should leave a good name behind. This Tilak soon became a man, and had excellent qualities. All the time he lived he sustained no injury on account of being the son of a barber. But if with such a character, wisdom and spirit, he had been of good extraction, he would have been better, for nobility and talents are both very agreeable. But nobility is good for nothing, if learning, propriety and spirit are wanting.

F. AHMAD NIALTIGIN AT BANARAS, ABU-L FAZL AL BAIHAKI¹⁶

Unexpectedly (na-gah) he arrived at a city which is called Banaras and which belonged to the territory of Gang. Never had a Muhammadan army reached this place. The city was two parasangs square, and contained plenty of water. The army could only remain there from morning to mid-day prayer because of the peril. The markets of the drapers, perfumers, and jewellers, were plundered, but it was impossible to do more. The people of the army became rich, for they all carried off gold, silver, perfumes, and jewels, and got back in safety...

G. MUHAMMAD GHORI

1. Muhammad Ghori's defeat by the Rai of Nahrwala, *Minhaju-s Siraj*¹⁷

In the year after this victory he conducted his army by way of Uch and Multan towards Nahrwala. The Rai of Nahrwala, Bhim-deo, was a minor, but he had a large army and many elephants. In the day of battle the Muhammadans

were defeated and the Sultan was compelled to retreat. This happened in the year 574 H. (1178 A.D.).

2. Battle of Tarain, Minhaju-s Siraj¹⁸

Rai Kolah Pithaura came up against the fort, and the Sultan returned and faced him at Narain. All the Rais of Hindustan were with the Rai Kolah. The battle was formed and the Sultan, seizing a lance, made a rush upon the elephant which carried Gobind Rai of Delhi. The latter advanced to meet him in front of the battle, and then the Sultan, who was a second Rustam, and the Lion of the Age, drove his lance into the mouth of the Rai and knocked two of the accursed wretch's teeth down his throat. The Rai, on the other hand, returned the blow and inflicted a severe wound on the arm of his adversary. The Sultan reined back his horse and turned aside, and the pain of the wound was so insufferable that he could not support himself on horseback. The Musulman army gave way and could not be controlled. The Sultan was just falling when a sharp and brave young Khilji recognised him, jumped upon the horse behind him, and clasping him round the bosom, spurred on the horse and bore him from the midst of the fight.

When the Musulmans lost sight of the Sultan, a panic fell upon them; they fled and halted not until they were safe from the pursuit of the victors. A party of nobles and youths of Ghor had seen and recognised their leader with that lionhearted Khilji, and when he came up they drew together, and, forming a kind of litter with broken lances, they bore him to the halting-place. The hearts of the troops were consoled by his appearance, and the Muhammadan faith gathered new strength in his life. He collected the scattered forces and retreated to the territories of Islam, leaving Kazi Tolak in the fort of Sarhind. Rai Pithaura advanced and invested the fort, which he besieged for thirteen months.

Next year the Sultan assembled another army, and advanced to Hindustan to avenge his defeat. A trustworthy person named Mu'inu-d din, one of the principal men of the hills of Tolak, informed me that he was in this army, and that its force amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand horsemen bearing armour. Before the Sultan could arrive the fort of Sarhind had capitulated, and the enemy were encamped in the vicinity of Narain. The Sultan drew up his battle array, leaving his main body in the rear, with the banners, canopies, and elephants, to the number of several divisions. His plan of attack being formed, he advanced quietly. The light unarmoured horsemen were made into four divisions of 10,000, and were directed to advance and harass the enemy on all sides, on the right and on the left, in the front and in the rear, with their arrows. When the enemy collected his forces to attack, they were to support each other, and to charge at full speed. By these tactics the infidels were worsted, the Almighty gave us the victory over them, and they fled.

Pithaura alighted from his elephant, mounted a horse, and galloped off but he was captured near Sarsuti, and sent to hell. Gobind Rai, of Delhi, was killed in the battle, and the Sultan recognised his head by the two teeth which he had broken. The capital, Ajmir, and all the Siwalik hills, Hansi, Sarsuti, and other districts were the results of this victory, which was gained in the year 588 H. (1192 A.D.)

3. Conquest of Ajmer by Muhammad Ghori, Hasan Nizami¹⁹

He accordingly prepared for an expedition against the Rai [of Ajmer], and mounted his steed, of which there is a poetical description "The victorious army on the right and on the left departed towards Ajmir." "When the Kola (natural son) of the Rai of Ajmir, the vaunts of whose courage had reached the ears of far and near, heard of the approach of the auspicious standard and the victorious armies, he advanced for the purpose of fighting, and having adjusted the robe of slaughter and the arms of battle, marched on over hills and deserts with a well-equipped army, the number which cannot be conceived in the picture gallery of the imagination."...

The army of Islam was completely victorious, and "an hundred thousand grovelling Hindus swiftly departed to the fire of hell." The Rai of Ajmir was taken prisoner during the action, but his life was spared. After this great victory, the army of Islam marched forward to Ajmir, where it arrived at a fortunate moment and under an auspicious bird, and obtained so much booty and wealth, that you might have said, that the secret depositaries of the seas and hills had been revealed."

While the Sultan remained at Ajmir, "he destroyed the pillars and foundations of the idol temples, and built in their stead mosques and colleges, and the precepts of Islam, and the customs of the law were divulged and established."

4. The conquest of Delhi by Muhammad Ghori, Hasan Nizami²⁰

After settling the affairs of Ajmir, the conqueror marched "towards Dehli (may God preserve its prosperity and perpetuate its splendour!) which is among the chief (mother) cities of Hind." When he arrived at Dehli, he saw "a fortress which in height and strength had not its equal nor second throughout the length and breadth of the seven climes." The army encamped around the fort. "A torrent of blood flowed on the field of battle, and it became evident to the chiefs that if they did not seek for safety from the sword of the king of the earth, and if they should deliver into the hands of Satan the time of option and the reins of good counsel, the condition of Dehli would be like that of Ajmir; so from the dread of kingly punishment, the Rai and mukaddams of that country placed their heads upon the line of slavery, and their feet within the circle of

obedience, and made firm the conditions of tribute (*malguzari*) and the usages of service."

The Sultan then returned "towards the capital of Ghazna (may God preserve it in prosperity!)" but "the army remained encamped within the boundary of Dehli, at the *mauza* of Indarpat (Indraprastha)."

5. The flight of Jatwan [probably a leader of the Jats] and his death in battle, Hasan Nizami²¹

"When the honoured month of Ramazan, 588 H., the season of mercy and pardon, arrived, fresh intelligence was received at the auspicious Court, that the accursed Jatwan, having admitted the pride of Satan into his brain, and placed the cup of chieftainship and obstinacy upon his head, had raised his hand in fight against Nusratu-d din, the Commander, under the fort of Hansi, with an army animated by one spirit."

Kutbu-d din mounted his horse, and "marched during one night twelve parasangs." "The accursed Jatwan, when he heard the news of the arrival of the victorious armies, felt himself compelled to depart from under the fort," and fled. "The soldiers of Islam came up to the army of Hind on the borders of Bagar; and although Jatwan saw there was no chance of successful opposition in battle, yet as he saw destruction impending on him from the throat of the dragon, and the road for flight was blocked up, and the standards of the State and royal victory were unfurled, yielding to the necessity of the case, and not at his own option," he prepared for fight, and the noise of the hautbois and shells confounded the world, the thunder of the drums ascended to heaven, and the blast of the brazen clarions resembled the sounding trump (of resurrection.)"

The armies attacked each other "like two hills of steel, and the field of battle became tulip-dyed with the blood of the warriors." The Hindus were completely defeated, and their leader slain. "Jatwan, who was the essence of vice and turbulence, and the rod of infidelity and perverseness, the friend of grief, and the companion of shame, had his standards of God-plurality and ensigns of perdition lowered by the hand of power;" "and the dust of the field of battle was commingled with the blood of that God-abandoned wretch, and the whole country was washed from the filth of his idolatry."

6. Fight with the Rai of Banaras and capture of Asni, Hasan Nizami²²

When the army was mustered, it was found to amount to "fifty thousand mounted men clad in armour and coats of mail," with which they advanced to fight against the Rai of Benares. The king ordered Kutbu-d din to proceed with the vanguard, consisting of one thousand cavalry, which fell upon "the army of the enemies of religion," and completely defeated it. On its return to

the king, the officers were presented with robes of honour.

"The Rai of Benares, Jai Chand, the chief of idolatry and perdition, advanced to oppose the royal troops with an army, countless as the particles of sand," and the noise of the war-drum proclaimed to the ears of the worshippers of one God, aid comes from the Almighty, and the sound of the silver kettledrum and the blast of the brazen trumpets resounded to heaven." "The Rai of Benares, who prided himself on the number of his forces and war elephants," seated on a lofty howdah, received a deadly wound from an arrow, and fell from his exalted seat to the earth." His head was carried on the point of a spear to the commander, and "his body was thrown to the dust of contempt." "The impurities of idolatry were purged by the water of the sword from that land, and the country of Hind was freed from vice and superstition."

"Immense booty was obtained, such as the eye of the beholder would be weary to look at," including one (some copies say three) hundred elephants. The royal army then took possession "of the fort of Asni where the treasure of the Rai was deposited," and there much more precious spoil of all kinds rewarded the victors.

7. The capture of Banaras, Hasan Nizami²³

From that place the royal army proceeded towards Benares, "which is the centre of the country of Hind," and here they destroyed nearly one thousand temples, and raised mosques on their foundations; and the knowledge of the law became promulgated, and the foundations of religion were established;" "and the face of the dinar and the diram was adorned with the name and blessed titles" of the king.

8. The capture of Gwalior, Hasan Nizami²⁴

When the affairs of this tract was settled, the royal army marched, in the year 592 H., (1196 A.D.) "towards Galewar (Gwalior), and invested that fort, which is the pearl of the necklace of the castles of Hind, the summit of which the nimble-footed wind from below cannot reach, and on the bastion of which the rapid clouds have never cast their shade, and which the swift imagination has never surmounted, and at the height of which the celestial sphere is dazzled..."

"Rai Solankh Pal who had raised the standard of infidelity, and perdition, and prided himself on his countless army and elephants, and who expanded the fist of oppression from the hiding place of deceit, and who had lighted the flame of turbulence and rebellion, and who had fixed the root of sedition and enmity firm in his heart, and in the courtyard of whose breast the shrub of tyranny and commotion had shot forth its branches, when he saw the power

and majesty of the army of Islam," he became alarmed and dispirited. "Wherever he looked, he saw the road of flight blocked up." He therefore "sued for pardon, and placed the ring of servitude in his ear," and agreed to pay tribute, and sent ten elephants as a peace offering, in which he was graciously admitted to protection, and was allowed to retain his fort. "When the neighbouring country was freed from the enemies of religion, and the Rai of Hind became enrolled amongst the number of servants and friends," the Sultan prepared to return to Ghazna, and Kutbu-d din, after his departure, returned to Dehli, where festivities were celebrated on his arrival. — Praise of wine-bibbing and cup-bearers.

9. The conquest of Nahrwala, the most celebrated city of Gujarat, Hasan Nizami²⁵

"In the middle of the month of Safar, 593 H. (Jan., 1197), the world-conquering Khusru departed from Ajmir, and with every description of force turned his face towards the annihilation of the Rai of Nahrwala." When he reached the lofty forts of Pali and Nandul, he found them abandoned, and the abode of owls, for the people had fled at the approach of the Musulmans, and had collected under their leaders Rai Karan and Darabars, in great numbers" at the foot of Mount Abu, and at the mouth of a pass stood ready for fight and slaughter." The Musulmans did not dare to attack them in that strong position, especially as in that very place Sultan Muhammad Sam Ghori had been wounded, and it was considered of bad omen to bring on another action there, lest a similar accident might occur to the commander. The Hindus seeing this hesitation, and misconstruing it into cowardice and alarm, abandoning the pass, "turned their faces towards the field of battle and the plain of honour and renown;" for "they were persuaded that fear had established itself in the hearts of the protectors of the seared enclosure of religion." "The two armies stood face to face for some time, engaged in preparations for fight, and on the night preceding Sunday, the 13th of Rabi'u-l awwal, in a fortunate moment the army of Islam advanced from its camp, and at morn reached the position of the infidels." A severe action ensued from dawn to mid-day, when "the army of idolatry and damnation turned its back in flight from the line of battle. Most of their leaders were taken prisoners, and nearly fifty thousand infidels were despatched to hell by the sword, and from the heaps of the slain, the hills and the plains became of one level." Rai Karan effected his escape from the field. "More than twenty thousand slaves, and twenty elephants, and cattle and arms beyond all calculation, fell into the hands of the victors." "You would have thought that the treasures of the kings of all the inhabited world had come into their possession."

10. Capture of the fort of Kalinjar, Hasan Nizami²⁶

In the year 599 H. (1202 A.D.), Kutbu-d din proceeded to the investment of Kalinjar, on which expedition he was accompanied by the Sahib-Kiran, Shamsu-d din Altamsh. ‘The accursed Parmar,’ the Rai of Kalinjar, fled into the fort after a desperate resistance in the field, and afterwards surrendered himself, and “placed the collar of subjection” round his neck, and, on his promise of allegiance, was admitted on the same favours as his ancestor had experienced from Mahmud Subuktigin, and engaged to make a payment of tribute and elephants, but he died a natural death before he could execute any of his engagements. His Diwan, or Mahtea, by name Aj Deo, was not disposed to surrender so easily as his master, and gave his enemies much trouble, until he was compelled to capitulate, in consequence of severe drought having dried up all the reservoirs of water in the forts. “On Monday, the 20th of Rajab, the garrison, in an extreme state of weakness and distraction, came out of the fort, and by compulsion left their native place empty,” “and the fort of Kalinjar which was celebrated throughout the world for being as strong as the wall of Alexander” was taken. “The temples were converted into mosques and abodes of goodness, and the ejaculations of the bead-counters and the voices of the summoners to prayer ascended to the highest heaven, and the very name of idolatry was annihilated.” “Fifty thousand men came under the collar of slavery, and the plain became black as pitch with Hindus.” Elephants and cattle, and countless arms also became the spoil of the victors.

11. Death of Sultan Muhammad Sam, Hasan Nizami²⁷

On the king’s return from Lahore towards Ghazni, he had fixed his camp “within the borders of Dhamek, and his tent was pitched on the bank of a pure stream in a garden filled with lilies, jasmins,” and other flowers. Here while he was engaged in his evening prayer, “some impious men (God’s curse and destruction on them!) came running like the wind towards his majesty, the king of the world, and on the spot killed three armed attendants and two chamber-sweepers. They then surrounded the king’s own tent, and one or two men out of these three or four conspirators, ran up towards the king, and inflicted five or six desperate wounds upon the lord of the seven climes, and his spirit flew above the eight paradises and the battlements of the nine heavens, and joined those of the ten evangelists.”

12. Death of Muhammad Ghori, Alau-d din Juwaini²⁸

In the year 602 H. (1205 A.D.), Muhammad Ghori determined on prosecuting a holy war in Hind, in order to repair the fortunes of his servants and armies; for within the last few years Khurasan, on account of the disasters it had sustained, yielded neither men nor money. When he arrived in Hind,

God gave him such a victory that his treasures were replenished, and his armies renewed. On his return, after crossing the Jailam, he was encamped on the banks of the Jihun (Indus), so that one-half of the royal enclosure, where the private apartments were, was in the water. In consequence of which no precaution had been taken to ensure their protection. About the time of the mid-day siesta, two or three Hindus came through the water, and falling like fire upon the royal tent, slew the Sultan, who was entirely unprepared for such a treacherous attack.

H. MALIK GHAZI IKHTIYARU-D DIN MUHAMMAD BAKHTIYAR KHILJI, OF LAKHNAUTI

1. Invasion of Bihar and Bengal, Minhaju-s Siraj²⁹

It is related that this Muhammad Bakhtiyar was a Khilji, of Ghor, of the province of Garmsir. He was a very smart, enterprising, bold, courageous, wise, and experienced man...Being a bold and enterprising man, he used to make incursions into the districts of Munir (Monghir), and Behar, and bring away much plunder, until in this manner he obtained plenty of horses, arms, and men. The fame of his bravery and of his plundering raids spread abroad, and a body of Khiljis joined him from Hindustan. His exploits were reported to Sultan Kutbu-d din, and he sent him a dress and showed him great honour. Being thus encouraged, he led his army to Behar and ravaged it. In this manner he continued for a year or two to plunder the neighbourhood, and at last prepared to invade the country.

It is said by credible persons that he went to the gate of the fort of Behar with only two hundred horse, and began the war by taking the enemy unawares. In the service of Bakhtiyar there were two brothers of great intelligence. One of them was named Nizamu-d din and the other Samsamu-d din. The compiler of this book met Samsamu-d din at Lakhnauti in the year 641 H. (1243 A.D.), and heard the following story from him. When Bakhtiyar reached the gate of the fort, and the fighting began, these two wise brothers were active in that army of heroes. Muhammad Bakhtiyar with great vigour and audacity rushed in at the gate of the fort and gained possession of the place. Great plunder fell into the hands of the victors. Most of the inhabitants of the place were Brahmans with shaven heads. They were put to death. Large numbers of books were found there, and when the Muhammadans saw them, they called for some persons to explain their contents, but all the men had been killed. It was discovered that the whole fort and city was a place of study (*madrasa*). In the Hindi language the word Behar (*vihar*) means a college....

After receiving a robe from the Sultan he returned to Behar. Great fear

of him prevailed in the minds of the infidels of the territories of Lakhnauti, Behar, Bang (Bengal), and Kamrup.

It is related by credible authorities that mention of the brave deeds and conquests of Malik Muhammad Bakhtiyar was made before Rai Lakhmaniya, whose capital was the city of Nudiya...

Next year Muhammad Bakhtiyar prepared an army, and marched from Behar. He suddenly appeared before the city of Nudiya with only eighteen horsemen, the remainder of his army was left to follow. Muhammad Bakhtiyar did not molest any man, but went on peaceably and without ostentation, so that no one could suspect who he was. The people rather thought that he was a merchant, who had brought horses for sale. In this manner he reached the gate of Rai Lakhmaniya's palace, when he drew his sword and commenced the attack. At this time the Rai was at his dinner, and golden and silver dishes filled with food were placed before him according to the usual custom. All of a sudden a cry was raised at the gate of his palace and in the city. Before he had ascertained what had occurred, Muhammad Bakhtiyar had rushed into the palace and put a number of men to the sword. The Rai fled barefooted by the rear of the palace, and his whole treasure, and all his wives, maid servants, attendants, and women fell into the hands of the invader. Numerous elephants were taken, and such booty was obtained by the Muhammadans as is beyond all compute. When his army arrived, the whole city was brought under subjection, and he fixed his headquarters there.

Rai Lakhmaniya went towards Sanknat and Bengal, where he died. His sons are to this day rulers in the territory of Bengal. When Muhammad Bakhtiyar had taken possession of the Rai's territory, he destroyed the city of Nudiya and established the seat of his government at Lakhnauti. He brought the surrounding places into his possession, and caused his name to be read in the Khutba and struck on the coins. Mosques, colleges, and monasteries were raised everywhere by the generous efforts of him and his officers, and he sent a great portion of the spoil to Sultan Kutbu-d din.

2. Desires to take Turkistan and Tibet, worsted in Kamrup, Minhajus Siraj³⁰

When several years had elapsed, he received information about the territories of Turkistan and Tibet, to the east of Lakhnauti, and he began to entertain a desire of taking Tibet and Turkistan. For this purpose he prepared an army of about ten thousand horse. Among the hills which lie between Tibet and the territory of Lakhnauti, there are three races of people.

The one is called Kuch (Kuch Behar), the second Mich, and the third, Tiharu. They all have Turki features and speak different languages, something between the language of Hind and that of Tibet. One of the chiefs of the tribes

of Kuch and Mich, who was called Ali Mich, had been converted to Muhammadanism by Muhammad Bakhtiyar, and this man agreed to conduct him into the hills. He led him to a place where there was a city called Mardhan-kot. It is said that in the ancient times when Gurshasp Shah returned from China, he came to Kamrud (Kam-rup) and built this city. Before the town there runs a stream which is exceedingly large. It is called Bangamati [Brahmaputra]. When it enters the country of Hindustan it receives in the Hindi language the name of Samundar. In length, breadth, and depth, it is three times greater than the Ganges. Muhammad Bakhtiyar came to the banks of this river, and Ali Mich went before the Muhammadan army. For ten days they marched on until he led them along the upper course of the river into the hills, to a place where from old times a bridge had stood over the water having about twenty (*bist o and*) arches of stone. When the army reached the bridge, Bakhtiyar posted there two officers, one a Turk, and the other a Khilji, with a large force to secure the place till his return. With the remainder of the army he then went over the bridge. The Rai of Kamrup, on receiving intelligence of the passage of the Muhammadans, sent some confidential officers to warn Bakhtiyar against invading the country of Tibet, and to assure him that he had better return and make more suitable preparations. He also added that he, the Rai of Kamrup, had determined that next year he also would muster his forces and precede the Muhammadan army to secure the country. Muhammad Bakhtiyar paid no heed to these representations, but marched on towards the hills of Tibet.

One night in the year 641 (1243 A.D.) he halted at a place between Deokot and Bangawan, and stayed as a guest in the house of Muatamadu-d daula, who had formerly been an equerry in the service of Muhammad Bakhtiyar and had lived in the town of Lakhnauti. From this man he heard that after passing over the bridge, the road lay for fifteen stages through the defiles and passes of the mountains, and at the sixteenth stage level land was reached. The whole of that land was well populated, and the villages were flourishing. The village which was first reached had a fort, and when the Muhammadan army made an attack upon it, the people in the fort and the surrounding places came to oppose them, and a battle ensued. The fight raged from morning till the time of afternoon prayer, and large numbers of the Muhammadans were slain and wounded. The only weapons of the enemy were bamboo spears; and their armour, shields and helmets, consisted only of raw silk strongly fastened and sewed together. They all carried long bows and arrows. When night came on, the prisoners who had been taken were brought forward and questioned, and it was then ascertained that at five parasangs from that place there was a city called Karam-batan, and in it there was about three hundred and fifty thousand brave Turks armed with bows. The moment the horsemen of the

Muhammadans arrived, messengers went to report their approach, and these messengers would reach their destination next morning. When the author was at Lakhnauti, he made enquiries about that place, and learnt that it was a pretty large city. The ramparts of it are built of stone. The inhabitants of it are Brahmans and Nunis, and the city is under the sway of the chief of these people. They profess the Buddhist religion. Every morning in the market of that city, about fifteen hundred horses are sold. All the saddle horses which come into the territory of Lakhnauti are brought from that country. Their roads pass through the ravines of the mountains, as is quite common in that part of the country. Between Kamrup and Tibet there are thirty-five mountain passes through which horses are brought to Lakhnauti.

In short, when Muhammad Bakhtiyar became aware of the nature of the country, and saw that his men were tired and exhausted, and that many had been slain and disabled in the first day's march, he consulted with his nobles, and they resolved that it was advisable to retreat, that in the following year they might return to the country in a state of greater preparation. On their way back there was not left on all the road a single blade of grass or a bit of wood. All had been set on fire and burnt. The inhabitants of the valleys and passes had all removed far away from the road, and for the space of fifteen days not a sir of food nor a blade of grass or fodder was to be found, and they were compelled to kill and eat their horses.

When, after descending the hill of the land of Kamrup, they reached the bridge, they found that the arches of it had been demolished. The two officers who had been left to guard it had quarreled, and in their animosity to each other had neglected to take care of the bridge and the road, so the Hindus of Kamrup had come there and destroyed the bridge. When Muhammad Bakhtiyar with his army reached the place, he found no means of crossing. Neither was there a boat to be found, so he was greatly troubled and perplexed. They resolved to fix on some place where to encamp, and prepare rafts and boats to enable them to cross the river.

In the vicinity of this place was perceived a temple, very lofty and strong, and of beautiful structure. In it there were numerous idols of gold and silver, and one very large golden idol, which exceeded two or three thousand miskals in weight. Muhammad Bakhtiyar and the remnant of his army sought refuge in that temple, and set about procuring wood and ropes for constructing rafts to cross the stream. The Rai of Kamrup was informed of the distress and weakness of the Muhammadans, and he issued orders to all the Hindus of his territory to come up, levy after levy, and all around the temple they were to stick their bamboo spears in the ground and to plait them together so as to form a kind of wall. Then the soldiers of Islam saw this they told Muhammad Bakhtiyar that if they remained passive they would all be taken in the trap of

the infidels and be made prisoners; some way of escape must be sought out. By common consent they made a simultaneous sally, and directing their efforts to one spot, they cleared for themselves a way through the dangerous obstacle to the open ground. The Hindus pursued them to the banks of the river and halted there. Every one exerted his ingenuity to devise some means of passing over the river. One of the soldiers urged his horse into the water, and it was found fordable to the distance of a bow-shot. A cry arose in the army that a fordable passage was found, and all threw themselves into the stream. The Hindus in their rear took possession of the banks. When the Muhammadans reached the middle of the stream, the water was found to be very deep, and they nearly all perished. Muhammad Bakhtiyar with some horse, to the number of about a hundred, more or less, crossed the river with the greatest difficulty, but all the rest were drowned....

I. TIMUR IN INDIA

1. Motives of the expedition to Hindustan³¹

About this time there arose in my heart the desire to lead an expedition against the infidels, and to become a *ghazi* for it had reached my ears that the slayer of infidels is a *ghazi*, and if he is slain he becomes a martyr....

My great officers told me that the inhabitants of Hindustan were infidels and unbelievers. In obedience to the order of Almighty God I determined on an expedition against them, and I issued orders to the *amirs* of mature years, and the leaders in war, to come before me, and when they had come together I questioned the assembly as to whether I should invade Hindustan or China, and said to them, "By the order of God and the Prophet it is incumbent upon me to make war upon these infidels and polytheists."...

My *wazirs* informed me that the whole amount of the revenue of India is six *arbs*; now each *arb* is a 100 *krors*, and each *kror* is 100 *lacs*, and each *lac* is a 100,000 *miskals* of silver. Some of the nobles said, "By the favour of Almighty God we may conquer India, but if we establish ourselves permanently therein, our race will degenerate and our children will become like the natives of those regions, and in a few generations their strength and valour will diminish." The *amirs* of regiments (*kushunat*) were disturbed at these words, but I said to them, "My object in the invasion of Hindustan is to lead an expedition against the infidels that, according to the law of Muhammad (upon whom and his family be the blessing and peace of God), we may convert to the true faith the people of that country, and purify the land itself from the filth of infidelity and polytheism; and that we may overthrow their temples and idols and become *ghazis* and *mujahids* before God."...

2. Account of the holy war against the infidel Kators and the Siyah-poshes³²

The kingdom of Kator

When I made enquiries concerning the extent and condition of that kingdom from Muzid, who was the chief man of Indarab, he informed me that the length of the kingdom of Kator stretches from the frontier of Kashmir to the mountains of Kabul, and there are many towns and villages in this country. One of their large cities is called Shokal, and another Jorkal, which latter is the residence of their ruler. The country produces fruits in large quantities, such as grapes, apples, apricots, and various other kinds. Rice and other grains are cultivated. Much wine is made, and all people, great and small, drink of it. The people eat swine's flesh. Cattle and sheep abound in this country. Most of the inhabitants are idolaters; they are men of a powerful frame and fair complexion. Their language is distinct from Turki, Persian, Hindi, and Kashmiri. Their weapons are arrows, swords, and slings. Their ruler is called Adalshu.

When I arrived at Khawak I perceived a dilapidated fort which I resolved to repair, so I immediately gave orders to the soldiers to that effect, and it was speedily executed. As most of the route was rocky and precipitous, I ordered most of the nobles and all the soldiers to leave horses, camels, and superfluous baggage in this fort. In obedience to this order most of the nobles and all the soldiers accompanied me on foot, while I, relying on the assistance of Almighty God, pressed steadily forward to the conquest of Kator and began to ascend the mountains. In spite of the heat of the wind there was so much snow on the hills that the feet of both men and cattle helplessly sank in it. I was therefore obliged to halt during the day, but at night when the snow congealed I pursued my way over the frozen surface of the ice till I reached the top of the mountain. At daybreak, when the ice thawed, carpets and horse-rugs were spread upon its surface and the horses were kept upon them. At nightfall we again went on as before, and in this manner I crossed several lofty mountains, but the nobles were obliged to send back to the fort several of the horses they had brought with them. When I reached the top of a lofty mountain, such that there can be none higher than it, I found that these wicked infidels had taken up their position in the caverns of the mountain, the entrances of which were blocked up with snow, so that they were almost inaccessible, nor, in spite of all my exertions, could I find a way to descend the mountain....

The ruler of Kator had a fort, on one side of which was a river, and beyond the river a lofty mountain reaching down to the water. As the infidels in this fort had gained intelligence of my approach a day before my arrival, and dread had taken possession of their hearts, they had removed their wealth

and property from the fort, and having crossed the river, had taken refuge in the mountain which was very lofty, and abounded in caves very difficult of access. On its being represented to me that this fort was the most important stronghold of the ruler of Kator in those parts, I resolved to subdue it. When I advanced into the neighbourhood of the fort I did not perceive a trace of the infidels, and when I came to the place itself I saw that they had abandoned it and fled. I obtained a booty of many sheep and some other things here, and ordered that they should set fire to the houses and buildings of the city, in the midst of which the fort was built, and that they should level it with the ground. Then crossing the river in haste and pursuing the track of the enemy, I reached the skirts of the mountain on the top of which the infidels had taken up their position in defiles and other strong places. I immediately gave orders to my valiant and experienced troops to ascend. Raising their war cry and shouting the *takbir*, they rushed to the attack, and before all the rest Shaikh Arslan Aztuman Kabak Khan, who is a lion in the day of battle, mounting the hill on the left hand, commenced the fight. Leading his men upon the infidels he put them to fight, and following up the enemy entered the fastnesses of the rock and sent numbers of the impious unbelievers to hell. Tawachi Ali Sultan, also on his side, made a valiant assault upon the foe, and with his own regiment charged and routed the infidel enemy, sending numbers of them to hell. Amir Shah Malik too, on his side, displayed great valour, making a great slaughter of the infidels and driving them completely out of the mountain. Mubashir Bahadur and Mankali Khwajah, and Sunjak Bahadur, and Shaikh Ali Salar, and Musa Zakmal, and Husain Malik Kuchin, and Mir Husain Kur, and the other nobles, displayed great valour and used their swords well. They all proved their zeal for Islam on the unbelieving foe, and having overpowered the infidels they put many of them to death, and took possession of their fastnesses. Only a few of the enemy succeeded in sheltering themselves, wounded and worn out with fatigue, in their caverns. Of my troops only fourteen persons lost their lives, and that was in effecting the passage of the mountain. Some of the infidels held out in their defiles for three days and nights, but sending my valiant troops against them I so pressed them that they were obliged to surrender and call for quarter. I sent Ak Sultan to them with the message that if they would consent to submit unconditionally and would all become Musulmans and repeat the creed, I would grant them quarter, but otherwise I would exterminate them to a man. When Ak Sultan reached the infidels with this message, which he explained to them through the medium of an interpreter conversant both with their language and with Turki, they all proffered submission, and repeating the necessary formula, embraced the Muhammadan faith. Relying upon this external profession I spared their lives and property, and gave orders that no one should interfere with their lives, wealth, or country. I then clothed some

of them in dresses of honour and dismissed them. I halted with my army there for that night, and these black-hearted infidels made a nocturnal assault on the regiment of Amir Shah Malik, but as this leader was on his guard, the enemy were foiled in their intentions. Numbers of them were slain, and 150 fell into our hands alive, who were afterwards put to death by my enraged soldiery. As soon as it was day I ordered my troops to attack on all four sides at once, and forcing their way into the defiles to kill all the men, to make prisoners the women and children, and to plunder and lay waste all their property. In obedience to these orders, my nobles and troops making a valiant assault on all sides at once, and putting to the sword the remnant of the infidels, consigned them to the house of perdition. They made prisoners of their women and children, and secured an enormous booty. I directed towers to be built on the mountain of the skulls of those obstinate unbelievers, and I ordered an engraver on stone, who was in my camp, to cut an inscription somewhere on those defiles to the effect that I had reached this country by such and such a route, in the auspicious month of Rama-zan, A. H. 800 (May, 1398): that if chance should conduct anyone to this spot he might know how I had reached it....

3. The annihilation of Nusrat [Jasrath] Khokhar³³

It was represented to me that in this country there was a certain *zamindar*, by name Nusrat, of the tribe of Khokhar, who, having established himself with two thousand bloodthirsty soldiers in a fortress on the bank of a lake, breathed out defiance and rebellion...I immediately marched to attack this Nusrat Khokhar...

When I arrived at the heavy swampy ground on the bank of the lake, where the God-forsaken Nusrat had taken up his position, I found that he was there with his two thousand men drawn up all ready to receive me...Nusrat himself fell among the slain, but it was not known how he had been killed, or whether he effected his escape. My victorious troops entered and set fire to the residence of Nusrat Khokhar, and having plundered the wealth and property of those Indians and taking an immense booty of' flocks, herds, buffaloes, etc., returned to my presence.

4. Conquest of the town of Sarsuti³⁴

When I made inquiries about the city of Sarsuti, I was informed that the people of the place were strangers to the religion of Islam, and that they kept hogs in their houses and ate the flesh of those animals. When they heard of my arrival, they abandoned their city. I sent my cavalry in pursuit of them, and a great fight ensued. All these infidel Hindus were slain, their wives and children were made prisoners, and their property and goods became the spoil

of the victors. The soldiers then returned, bringing with them several thousand Hindu women and children who became Muhammadans, and repeated the creed. Of all the braves who took part in this action, Adil Bahadur Farrash was the only one who fell...

5. Preparations for the conquest of Dehli³⁵

Massacre of 100,000 Hindus

I now held a Court...

At this Court Amir Jahan Shah and Amir Sulaiman Shah and other *amirs* of experience, brought to my notice that from the time of entering Hindustan up to the present time, we had taken more than 100,000 infidels and Hindus prisoners, and that they were all in my camp. On the previous day, when the enemy's forces made the attack upon us, the prisoners made signs of rejoicing, uttered imprecations against us, and were ready, as soon as they heard of the enemy's success, to form themselves into a body, break their bonds, plunder our tents, and then to go and join the enemy, and so increase his numbers and strength. I asked their advice about the prisoners, and they said that on the great day of battle these 100,000 prisoners could not be left with the baggage, and that it would be entirely opposed to the rules of war to set these idolaters and foes of Islam at liberty. In fact, no other course remained but that of making them all food for the sword. When I heard these words I found them in accordance with the rules of war, and I directly gave my command for the *Tawachis* to proclaim throughout the camp that every man who had infidel prisoners was to put them to death, and whoever neglected to do so should himself be executed and his property given to the informer. When this order became known to the *ghazis* of Islam, they drew their swords and put their prisoners to death. 100,000 infidels, impious idolaters, were on that day slain. Maulana Nasiru-d din 'Umar, a counsellor and man of learning, who, in all his life, had never killed a sparrow, now, in execution of my order, slew with his sword fifteen idolatrous Hindus, who were his captives...

War strategy

I did not wish the war to be of long continuance; so as soon as night was over and morning came, I arose to my devotions. I said the morning prayers in the congregation, and I repeated my private prayers, then I took the holy book, which I always carried with me, and sought a *fat* on the subject of the war. The verse which appeared was one in the chapter of the Bee. I immediately sought the interpretation of this verse from those who were present, and they replied that the manifest meaning of it was...I received this *fat* as a propitious indication, and acted in full reliance on its command and on the favour of God....

6. Defeat of Sultan Mahmud of Dehli³⁶

The whole of Sultan Mahmud's [the Tughlaq ruler of Delhi] army was defeated; part was slain, and part had found refuge in the fort, and I, exalted with victory, marched towards the fort. When I reached its gates I carefully reconnoitred its towers and walls, and then returned to the side of the *Hauz-i khass*... When I had pitched my camp here, the princes and *amirs* and *nuyans*, and all the generals and officers, came to wait upon me to pay their respects and offer their congratulations on this great victory....

I mounted my horse and rode towards the gate of the *maidan*. I alighted at the *'id-gah*, a lofty and extensive building, and I gave orders for my quarters to be moved there, and for my throne to be set up in the *id-gah*. I took my seat upon the throne and held a Court. The *saiyids*, the *kazis*, the *'ulama* (learned Musulmans), the *shaikhs*, and the great men and chiefs of the (Muhammadans of the) city assembled and came out to attend my Court. I had them introduced one by one, and they made their obeisances and were admitted to the honour of kissing my throne. I received every one of them with respect and kindness, and directed them to be seated. Fazlu-llah Balkhi was *vakil* and *naib* of Mallu Khan, and he came out to wait upon me and do homage, accompanied by a party of the officials and clerks of the government of Sultan Mahmud and Mallu Khan. Hereupon all the *saiyids*, *'ulama*, *shaikhs*, and other leading Musulmans arose, and, making the princes their mediators, they begged that quarter might be given to the people of Dehli, and that their lives might be spared. Out of respect to the *saiyids* and *ulama*, whom I had always held in great esteem and honour, I granted quarter to the inhabitants of the city. I then ordered my ensign (*tauk*) and royal standard to be raised, and the drums to be beaten and music played on the tops of the gates of Dehli. Rejoicings for the victory followed. Some of the clever men and poets that accompanied me worked the date of the victory into a verse, which they presented to me. of all these memorial verses I have introduced (only) this one into my memoirs —

‘On Wednesday, the eighth of Rabi’ the second (17th Dec., 1398), The Emperor Sahib-Kiran took the city of Dehli, etc., etc.

I rewarded and honourably distinguished the literary men and poets who presented these verses to me...

When Friday came, I sent Maulana Nasiru-d din 'Umar, with some other holy and learned men that accompanied my camp to the *masjid-i jami*, with directions to say the prayers for the Sabbath, and to repeat the *khutba* of my reign in the metropolis of Dehli. Accordingly, the *khutba*, with my name, was repeated in the pulpits of the mosques in the city of Dehli, and I rewarded the preachers with costly robes and presents....

7. Sack of Dehli³⁷

On the 16th of the month some incidents occurred which led to the sack of the city of Dehli, and to the slaughter of many of the infidel inhabitants. One was this. A party of fierce Turk soldiers had assembled at one of the gates of the city to look about them and enjoy themselves, and some of them laid violent hands upon the goods of the inhabitants. When I heard of this violence I sent some *amirs*, who were present in the city, to restrain the Turks. A party of soldiers accompanied these *amirs* into the city. Another reason was that some of the ladies of my harem expressed a wish to go into the city and see the palace of *Hazar-sutun* (thousand columns) which Malik Jauna built in the fort called Jahan-panah. I granted this request, and I sent a party of soldiers to escort the litters of the ladies. Another reason was that Jalal Islam and other *diwans* had gone into that city with a party of soldiers to collect the contribution laid upon the city. Another reason was that some thousand troopers with orders for grain, oil, sugar, and flour, had gone into the city to collect these supplies. Another reason was that it had come to my knowledge that great numbers of Hindus and *gabrs*, with their wives and children, and goods, and valuables, had come into the city from all the country round, and consequently I had sent some *amirs* with their regiments (*kushun*) into the city and directed them to pay no attention to the remonstrances of the inhabitants, but to seize and bring out these fugitives. For these several reasons a great number of fierce Turki soldiers were in the city. When the soldiers proceeded to apprehend the Hindus and *gabrs* who had fled to the city, many of them drew their swords and offered resistance. The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to old Dehli, burning up all it reached. The savage Turks fell to killing and plundering. The Hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed. The Hindus and *gabrs* of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting. The *amirs* who were in charge of the gates prevented any more soldiers from going into the place, but the flames of war had risen too high for this precaution to be of any avail in extinguishing them. On that day, Thursday, and all the night of Friday, nearly 15,000 Turks were engaged in slaying, plundering, and destroying. When morning broke on the Friday, all my army, no longer under control, went off to the city and thought of nothing but killing, plundering, and making prisoners. All that day the sack was general. The following day, Saturday, the 17th, all passed in the same way, and the spoil was so great that each man secured from fifty to a hundred prisoners, men, women, and children. There was no man who took less than twenty. The other booty was immense in rubies, diamonds, garnets, pearls, and other gems; jewels of gold and silver; *ashrafis*, *tankas* of gold and silver of the celebrated 'Alai coinage; vessels of gold and silver; and brocades and silks of

great value. Gold and silver ornaments of the Hindu women were obtained in such quantities as to exceed all account. Excepting the quarter of the *saiyids*, the *ulama*, and the other Musulmans, the whole city was sacked. The pen of fate had written down this destiny for the people of this city. Although I was desirous of sparing them I could not succeed, for it was the will of God that this calamity should fall upon the city.

On the following day, Sunday, it was brought to my knowledge that a great number of infidel Hindus had assembled in the *masjid-i jami* of Old Dehli, carrying with them arms and provisions, and were preparing to defend themselves. Some of my people who had gone that way on business were wounded by them. I immediately ordered Amir Shah Malik and Ali Sultan Tawachi to take a party of men and proceed to clear the house of God from infidels and idolaters. They accordingly attacked these infidels and put them to death. Old Dehli then was plundered...

By the will of God, and by no wish or direction of mine, all the three cities of Dehli, by name Siri, Jahanpanah, and Old Dehli, had been plundered. The *khutba* of my sovereignty, which is an assurance of safety and protection, had been read in the city. It was therefore my earnest wish that no evil might happen to the people of the place. But it was ordained by God that the city should be ruined. He therefore inspired the infidel inhabitants with a spirit of resistance, that they brought on themselves that fate which was inevitable...

8. Campaign against the infidels after sack of Dehli³⁸

I had been at Dehli fifteen days, which time I had passed in pleasure and enjoyment, holding royal Courts and giving great feasts. I then reflected that I had come to Hindustan to war against infidels, and my enterprise had been so blessed that wherever I had gone I had been victorious. I had triumphed over my adversaries, I had put to death some *lacs* of infidels and idolaters, and I had stained my proselyting sword with the blood of the enemies of the faith. Now this crowning victory had been won, and I felt that I ought not to indulge in ease, but rather to exert myself in warring against the infidels of Hindustan....

THREE VICTORIES IN ONE DAY

Hardwar

...some of the reconnoitring party came in with the information that there was a large number of Hindus assembled in the valley of Kutila [Kupila, Hardwar?] on the side of the Ganges, having made that valley a place of refuge. I instantly mounted, and leaving the greater part (*tamami*) of my force to secure the spoil, I started off for the valley of Kutila with only five hundred horsemen. When I reached the place I found an immense number of *gabrs*

assembled in the *darra*. Instantly I ordered Amir Shah Malik and Ali Sultan Tawachi to charge the enemy without paying the slightest heed to their numbers, although they were twenty to one. Spurring their horses, shouting their war-cry, and brandishing their swords, they fell upon the forces (*afwaj*) of the enemy like hungry lions upon a flock of sheep. At the first charge the ranks of the enemy were broken, and many of their men fell under the blows of the sword. God thus gave me victory with such a small band of followers over such a numerous host of the enemy. After many of them had been slain, those who escaped kept in the thickets and defiles (*darraha*), skulking like foxes and jackals. An immense booty was left, and my braves were busy in securing it...

Again I mounted my steed; and as I did so intelligence was brought to me that in the valley (*darra*) of Kutila, two *kos* distant, a large number of infidels and *gabrs* had collected with their wives and children, and with property, goods, and cattle beyond all estimate. The road thither was arduous, through jungles and thickets. When I heard this my first thought was that I had been awake since midnight, I had travelled a long distance without any halt, and had surmounted many difficulties, I had won two splendid victories with a few brave soldiers, and I was very tired, I would therefore stop and take rest. But then I remembered that I had drawn my sword, and had come to Hind with the resolution of waging a holy war against its infidels, and so long as it was possible to fight with them, rest was unlawful for me. Although I had only a few *amirs* and a few soldiers with me, I placed my trust in God, and determined to attack the enemy...

Pressing on with all haste I passed the jungles and thickets, and arrived in front of the infidels. After a slight resistance the enemy took to flight, but many of them fell under the swords of my soldiers.

All the wives and children of the infidels were made prisoners, and their property and goods, gold, money and grain, horses, camels (*shutur*), cows and buffalos in countless numbers, fell as spoil into the hands of my soldiers. Satisfied with this rout of the enemy, I said the afternoon prayers in public in that desert, and I returned thanks to God for that I had fought three times with enemies outnumbering my men by ten and twenty to one, and in each battle I had gained a signal victory.

Source of the Ganges

...information was brought to me that fifteen *kos* off, up the river, and near the mountains, there was a place in which there was the image of a cow, carved out of stone, and that the river (*ab*) ran from its mouth. In the belief of the people of Hindustan the source of the river Ganges was in this same mountain. The Hindu infidels worship the Ganges, and once every year they

come on to this place [Hardwar], which they consider the source of the river, to bathe and to have their heads and beards shaved. They believe these acts to be the means of obtaining salvation and securing future reward. They dispense large sums in charity among those who wear the brahmanical thread, and they throw money into the river. When infidels die in distant parts, their bodies are burned, and the ashes are brought to this river and are thrown into it. This they look upon as a means of sanctification. When I learned these facts, I resolved to war against the infidels of this place, so that I might obtain the merit of overthrowing them...

At dawn on the 5th Jumada-l awwal I said my morning prayer, and started with a suitable force for the valley of Kutita, which lies at the foot of a lofty mountain and on the banks of the Ganges. During the night all the *gabrs* who had been scattered reassembled under their chiefs, and as they had no place of refuge more secure, they resolved that if the Musulmans returned, they would fight till they died. So they were prepared for battle... My brave men displayed great courage and daring; they made their swords their banners, and exerted themselves in slaying the foe. They slaughtered many of the infidels, and pursued those who fled to the mountains. So many of them were killed that their blood ran down the mountains and the plain, and thus (nearly) all were sent to hell. The few who escaped, wounded, weary, and half dead, sought refuge in the defiles of the hills. Their property and goods, which exceeded all computation, and their countless cows and buffalos, fell as spoil into the hands of my victorious soldiers.

When I was satisfied with the destruction I had dealt out to the infidels, and the land was cleansed from the pollution of their existence, I turned back victorious and triumphant, laden with spoil. On that same day I crossed the Ganges, and said my mid-day prayers in the congregation, on the bank of that river. I prostrated myself in humble thanks to God, and afterwards again mounting my horse, marched five miles down the river and then encamped. It now occurred to my mind that I had marched as a conqueror from the river Sind to Dehli, the capital of the kings of India. I had put the infidels to the edge of the sword on both sides of my route, and had scoured the land; I had seized upon the throne of the kings of India; I had defeated Sultan Mahmud, the king of Dehli, and triumphed over him; I had crossed the rivers Ganges and Jumna, and I had sent many of the abominable infidels to hell, and had purified the land from their foul existence. I rendered thanks to Almighty God that I had accomplished my undertaking, and had waged against the infidels that holy war I had resolved upon: then I determined to turn my course towards Samarkand, my capital and paradise...

2. Gonzalez de Clavijo, who did not visit India, collected information on the country during his stay in the court of Timur in the years 1403-1406 from informants, including a grandson of Timur who had just returned from India. His account is contrary to the boastful narrative of Timur³⁹

The chief city of India is called Delhi and here Timour Beg fought a battle with the lord of India. The Indian collected a great force, and had fifty armed elephants; and in the first battle the lord of India defeated Timour Beg, by means of his elephants. On the following day they renewed the contest, and Timour took many camels, and loaded them with dry grass, placing them in front of the elephants. When the battle began, he caused the grass to be set on fire and when the elephants saw the burning straw upon the camels, they fled. They say that the elephants are much afraid of fire, because they have small eyes; and thus the lord of India was defeated.

Timour Beg conquered all the plain country from this lord, which bordered on the empire of Samarcand; but most of the land is rugged and mountainous. They say that there are many great towns and cities, and that the country is very rich and populous. When the lord of India was defeated, he fled to the mountains, and collected another force, but he did not venture to attack his enemy. The plain country which was then conquered, is governed by this grandson of Timour Beg from the great and rich city of Hormes; but the greater part of India is still held by the former lord. This battle took place about twelve years ago, and since that time, neither Timour Beg, nor his grandson have attempted to advance further into India.



Chapter 12

Muslim Rulers

- A. The Sultans of Delhi
- B. Sultan of Bedar
- C. Sultan of Padua

A. THE SULTANS OF DELHI

1. Qutbuddin Aibak, Minhaju-s Siraj¹

When Sultan-i Ghazi Muhammad Sam died, Sultan Ghiyasu-d din Mahmud Muhammad Sam, his nephew, gave Kutbu-d din the royal canopy, and the title of Sultan...in the year 607 H. the Sultan fell from his horse in the field while he was playing chaugan, and the horse came down upon him, so that the pommel of the saddle entered his chest, and killed him. The period of his government, from his first conquest of Dehli up to this time, was twenty years, and the time of his reign, during which he wore the crown, and had the Khutba read and coin struck in his name, was something more than four years.

2. Sultan Iltutmish, Minhaju-s Siraj²

After he had reached the capital he sent, in A.H. 632 (1234 A.D.), the army of Islam towards Malwa and took the fort and city of Bhilsa. There was a temple there which was three hundred years in building. It was about one hundred and five *gaz* high. He demolished it. From thence he proceeded to Ujjain, where there was a temple of Maha-kal, which he destroyed.

3. Sultan Ruknu-d din Firoz Shah, Minhaju-s Siraj³

Sultan Ruknu-d din Firoz Shah was a generous and handsome king, full of kindness and humanity. In liberality he was a second Hatim. His mother, the queen of the world, Shah Turkan, was originally a Turki handmaid, but

had become the chief wife of Sultan Shamsu-d din Altamsh. She lavished many offerings and much charity on learned men, *saiyids*, and devotees...

On the death of Sultan Shamsu-d din Altamsh, the princes and nobles placed Ruknu-d din upon the throne on Tuesday, 29th of Sha'ban 633 H. (beginning of May, 1236), and the crown and throne were graced by his accession. The nobles were gratified and received robes of honour. When they returned home from the capital, the new monarch opened the doors of his treasury and gave himself up to pleasure, squandering the public wealth in improper places. So devoted was he to licentiousness and debauchery that the business of the State was neglected and fell into confusion.

His mother, Shah Turkan, began to interfere in the government of the country. During the life of her husband his other women had looked upon her with envy and disdain. She now seized the opportunity of punishing them, and in blind fury and vindictiveness she put several of them to death. This state of things began to trouble the minds of public men. In addition to her other cruel acts she caused the young prince Kutbu-d din, son of the late king, and a very excellent youth, to be blinded and afterwards to be put to death. These acts aroused an inimical feeling in the hearts of the great men in all direction....

When Ruknu-d din arrived at Kilu-ghari he found that rebellion had broken out, and that his mother had been made prisoner. The guards and Turkish nobles came into the city, and joining Raziya, proffered their allegiance to her, and raised her to the throne. Being thus elevated to the throne, she sent an army of Turks and nobles to Kilu-ghari and they brought Sultan Ruknu-d din prisoner to Dehli, where he was kept in confinement and died. His death happened on Sunday, the 18th of Rabi'u-l awwal A.H. 634 (November, 1236 A.D.) He reigned for six months and twenty-eight days. He was very generous; no king in any reign had ever scattered gifts, robes of honour, and grants in the way he did, but all his lavishness sprang from his inordinate addiction to sensuality, pleasure, and conviviality. He was so entirely devoted to riot and debauchery, that he often bestowed his honours and rewards on bands of singers, buffoons, and catamites.

4. Sultan Raziya, Minhaju-s Siraj⁴

Sultan Raziya was a great monarch. She was wise, just, and generous, a benefactor to her kingdom, a dispenser of justice, the protector of her subjects, and the leader of her armies. She was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex, and so in the estimation of men all these virtues were worthless. (May God have mercy on her!)

5. Sultan-i Mu'azzam Nasiru-d dunya wau-d din Mahmud, Minhaju-s Siraj⁵

Sultan-i Mu'azzam Nasiru-d dunya wau-d din ascended the throne in the Green Palace at Delhi with the most favourable auspices on Sunday, 23rd Muharram 644 H. (10th June, 1246)...Ulugh Khan-I Azam, who now held the office of lord chamberlain, ...with the help of God, ravaged the hills of Jud and the Jailam, and sent many of the Kokhars (Gakkars) and rebellious infidels to hell...

In the neighbourhood of Kanauj there is a fortified village called Nandana, where there is a very strong fort vying with the wall of Alexander. A body of infidel Hindus shut themselves up in this place, resolved to fight to the extremity. For two days the royal army carried on a murderous conflict at this village, but at length the rebels were sent to hell, and the place subdued...

There was in the neighbourhood a Rana who (*ora*) was called Dalaki wa Malaki. He had many dependants, countless fighting men, great dominion and wealth, fortified places, and hills and defiles extremely difficult of access. All these he (Ulugh Khan) ravaged. He took prisoners the wives, sons, and dependants of that accursed one, and secured great booty...

...His Majesty...advanced as far as Malwa. Jahir Deo was the greatest of all the Ranas of that country and neighbourhood. He had five thousand horse and two hundred thousand infantry, but he was defeated...Ulugh exhibited great energy in this campaign...

On the 16th Ramazan Ulugh Khan was sent into the hills of Delhi, to chastise the rebel inhabitants of Mewat, and to intimidate their Deo. Ten thousand horsemen in armour, and a large army of brave and warlike soldiers were under his command. Great booty was gained, and many cattle captured. Defiles and passes were cleared, strong forts were taken, and numberless Hindus perished under the merciless swords of the soldiers of Islam...

6. Ghiyasu-d din Balban

(a) Of Turkish stock, Minhaju-s Siraj⁶

The Khakan-I Muazzam Ulugh Khan-I Azam belonged to the stock of the Khakans of Albari...The Almighty desired to grant a support to the power of Islam and to the strength of the Muhammadan faith, to extend his glorious shadow over it, and to preserve Hindustan within the range of his favour and protection. He therefore removed Ulugh Khan in his youth from Turkistan, and separated him from his race and kindred, from his tribe and relations, and

conveyed him to the country (of Hindustan), for the purpose of curbing the Mughals [Mongols]...

(b) Campaigns in the Jud hills, Minhaju-s Siraj⁷

On Monday, the 1st Rajab, 644 H., the army set forth and proceeded to the river Sodra. Here Ulugh Khan was detached with several nobles and generals to make an incursion into the hills of Jud. The Rana of these hills had acted as guide to the infidel Mughals, and it was now determined to take vengeance. Ulugh Khan accordingly attacked the hills of Jud, and the countries on the Jailam, and led his forces as far as the banks of the Indus. All the women and dependants of the infidels which were in those parts were obliged to flee, and a party of the Mughal army crossed over the Jailam, and saw the forces which were arrayed under the command of Ulugh Khan. The manifold lines of the army, the numbers of the horse, the armour and the arms, filled the observers with wonder and dismay. The bravery and generalship which Ulugh Khan displayed in scaling the mountains, breaking through defiles, capturing fortified places, and crossing jungles, cannot be described in writing. The fame of this campaign extended to Turkistan...

The perseverance and resolution of Ulugh Khan had been the means of showing to the army of Turkistan and the Mughals such bravery and generalship that in the course of this year no one came from the upper parts towards Sindh...

(c) Turkish monopoly of power, Minhaju-s Siraj⁸

The nobles and servants of the State were all Turks of pure origin and Taziks of good stock, but Imadu-d din [an Indian convert] was an eunuch and impotent; he, moreover, belonged to one of the tribes of Hindustan. Notwithstanding all this he exercised authority over the heads of all these chiefs. They were disgusted with this state of affairs and could no longer endure it...

(d) Campaigns against the infidels, Minhaju-s Siraj⁹

At the beginning of 658 H. (December, 1259), Ulugh Khan resolved upon a campaign in the hills near the capital. These hills were inhabited by a turbulent people, who committed depredations on the roads, plundered the goods of Musulmans, drove away the cultivators, and ravaged the villages in the districts of Harriana, the Siwalik hills, and Bayana. Three years before they had carried off from Hansi a drove of camels and a number of the people of Ulugh Khan. Their chief was a Hindu named Malka, a fierce and desperate fellow. It was he who carried off the camels, and he fomented disturbances among the Hindus

from the hills to Rantambhor. But when he did these things the army was otherwise engaged...in repelling the Mughal forces, which had attacked the frontiers of Islam in Sindh, at Lahore, and in the vicinity of the river Biyah....

Ulugh Khan and other nobles...resolved upon a campaign in the hills, and made the first march in advance on Monday, 4th Safar, 658. In their first forced march (*kashish*) they accomplished nearly fifty *kos*, and fell unexpectedly upon the rebels. These retreated to the summits of the mountains, to the defiles, to deep gorges and narrow valleys, but they were all taken and put to the sword. For twenty days the troops traversed the hills in all directions. The villages and habitations of the mountaineers were on the summits of the loftiest hills and rocks, and were of great strength, but they were all taken and ravaged by order of Ulugh Khan...A silver *tanka* was offered for every head, and two *tankas* for every man brought in alive. Eager for these rewards the soldiers climbed the highest hills, and penetrated the ravines and deepest gorges, and brought in heads and captives...Fortune now so favoured Ulugh Khan that he was able to penetrate to a fastness which no Musulman army had ever reached...

In the course of twenty days this great work was accomplished, and the army returned to the capital on the 24th Rabi'u-l, 658. His Majesty, with a great retinue of chiefs and nobles, came forth to the plain of Hauz-rani to meet him, and a grand Court was held in which many honours and rewards were bestowed. After a stay of two days in the capital the Court went forth again to Hauz-rani on a mission of revenge. The elephants were prepared, and the Turks made ready their trenchant swords. By royal command many of the rebels were cast under the feet of elephants, and the fierce Turks cut the bodies of the Hindus in two. About a hundred met their death at the hands of the flayers, being skinned from head to foot; their skins were all stuffed with straw, and some of them were hung over every gate of the city. The plain of Hauz-rani and the gates of Delhi remembered no punishment like this, nor had any one heard such a tale of horror...

The last event which I have to record is this. When Ulugh Khan carried war into the hills, and punished the rebels in the way we have related, a number of them escaped by flight. They now again took to plundering on the highways, and murdering Musulmans, so that the roads became dangerous. This being reported to the Khan, he sent emissaries and spies to find out the places where the rebels had taken refuge, and to make a full report of their state and condition. On Monday, 24th Rajab, 658 (July, 1260), he marched from Delhi with his own forces, the main army, and the forces of several chiefs. He hastened towards the hills, and, accomplishing more than fifty *kos* in one day's journey

(!), he fell upon the insurgents unawares, and captured them all, to the number of twelve thousand – men, women, and children – whom he put to the sword. All their valleys and strongholds were overrun and cleared, and great booty captured. Thanks be to God for this victory of Islam.

7. Alauddin Khalji

(a) Alauddin and the Mongol invasions, Abdu-llah Wassaf¹⁰

When Sultan ‘Alau-d din had fully established himself in the empire of Dehli, and his conquests and holy wars had proclaimed him universally as the greatest champion of the Muhammadan religion, it happened, that in the year 708, Ali Beg Gurgan, with an army consisting of three tumans, marched to Hindustan, and pitched his camp in the vicinity of ‘Iwaz (Oudh) and Badaun, expecting to make an easy conquest of that country. The Sultan dispatched his general Hazar-Dinari, who was called Malik Kafur, with 80,000 formidable and veteran cavalry to expel them; and when the army of Islam was within the distance of a day’s journey from the enemy, it made suddenly a night attack on their camp, which was left quite unguarded, and the greater part of the Mughal armies received their retribution (*iwaz*) from the empire of Dehli, where they met with the silent tomb of entire annihilation. Having surrounded the remnant on the field of battle they deprived them of their arms,” and ‘Ali Beg and other officers of the Mughals were carried captive to Dehli.

“Sultan ‘Alau-d din gave orders that the sword of menace and the declaration of unity should be offered to them; when, as they could not help themselves, they placed their heads on the line of Islam,” and repeated the profession of the Muhammadan creed.... “Alau-d din honoured and gave preferment to Ali Beg, and made him one of his nobles, and the Mughal army was provided for amongst the armies of Islam. After the battle an order was issued by Alau-d din to gather together the heads of those who had been slain. This matter was specially made over to the Hindus. On counting them after they were thrown at the feet of the holy warrior they were found to amount to 60,000, and, as was done with the Nigudari [a younger son of the Mongol invader, Chagatai] Mughals, a pillar was constructed of these heads before the Badaun gate, in order that it might be a warning and spectacle to future generations.

(b) Invasion of Telingana, Abdu-llah, Wassaf¹¹

In the year 709 (1309 A.D.), – the year arrived in prosperity and the time was propitious – the lofty mind of the king greatly inclined towards the

conquest of the whole of Hindustan, and the subjection of the infidels. Previous to this, Malwa had been conquered; he, therefore dispatched Malik Nabu, Zafar Khan, and Nanak Hindi, with an army consisting of one hundred thousand horse and foot, — Oh thou for whom there is an army that obtains victory, — to conquer the province of Telingana. When they arrived on its frontier, the Rai of that province adopted a prudent resolution, submitted to the Muhammadans, and agreed to pay an annual tribute and receive the royal collectors, and that populous territory replete with every kind of wealth — As the cheek of your friend full of excellence, In which are all desires you are in search of, — containing more than 30,000 tracts of country, was added to the Muhammadan empire. It is related that 6,000 kharwars, or loads, of gold were dispatched to Dehli, — Much yellow gold was in the large sacks, — and in consequence of the abundance of diamonds obtained by plunder, they became so cheap that, one weighing a miskal, could be purchased for three dinars.

(c) Invasion of Dwarsamundar, Abdu-llah, Wassaf¹²

The royal army marched from this place towards the country of Dur Samun. Rai Pandya offered opposition, and begged the assistance of an army from Ma'bar. At that time enmity prevailed between the two brothers, Sundar Pandi and Tira Pandi, after the murder of their father. The latter sent to his assistance an army of horse and foot. Subsequently, the Rai, turning to the right rank, declined a contest, and, having proffered his submission, he was left in possession of his country without the necessity of fighting. He delivered up to Malik Kafur the country of Arikanna, as a proof of his allegiance, and treasure beyond what imagination can conceive, together with 55 large elephants, which were worthy of carrying the great and fortunate heroes of the time, so that the country was restored to him, and, instead of shell-blowing, pyrolatry, and idol-worship, the true faith and the five daily prayers were established. On account of these transactions the fame of the first holy wars which opened Hind under Mahmud Subuktigin was erased from the page of history.

At the present time the imperial army consists of 475,000 Muhammadan disciplined holy warriors, whose names are recorded by the imperial muster-master, and whose pay and rations are entered in the regulations of the deputy-victualler. They are most obedient to the orders they receive, and are prepared to sacrifice their lives for the especial sake of their religion. Four hundred war elephants...are kept in the royal stables, and forty swift camels...are employed to convey daily reports, with the greatest expedition, from and to the distant provinces of the empire...—

(d) Invasion of Ma'bar, Abdu-llah, Wassaf¹³

In the month of Rajab of the year 710 H. (1310 A.D.) the appointed leaders, accompanied by a select army, were dispatched to conquer Ma'bar, and some of the towns were obtained through the animosity which has lately arisen between the two brothers; when at last a large army, attended by numerous elephants of war, was sent out to oppose the Muhammadans. Malik Nabu, who thought himself a very Saturn, was obliged to retreat, and bring back his army.

8. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq

(a) System of presenting gifts to the Sultan, Ibn Battuta¹⁴

Every person proceeding to the court of this king must needs have a gift ready to present to him, in order to gain his favour. The sultan requites him for it by a gift many times its value. When his subjects grew accustomed to this practice, the merchants in Sind and India began to furnish each newcomer with thousands of dinars as a loan, and to supply him with whatever he might desire to offer as a gift or to use on his own behalf, such as riding animals, camels, and goods. They place both their money and their persons at his service, and stand before him like attendants. When he reaches the sultan, he receives a magnificent gift from him and pays off his debt to them. This trade of theirs is a flourishing one and brings in vast profits. On reaching Sind I followed this practice and bought horses, camels, white slaves and other goods from the merchants. I had already bought from an 'Iraqi merchant in Ghazna about thirty horses and a camel with a load of arrows, for this is one of the things presented to the sultan. This merchant went off to Khurasan and on returning to India received his money from me. He made an enormous profit through me and became one of the principal merchants.

(b) The Sultan's palace, Ibn Battuta¹⁵

The sultan's palace at Delhi is called *Dar Sara*, and contains many doors. At the first door there are a number of guardians, and beside it trumpeters and flute-players. When any amir or person of note arrives they sound their instruments and say "So-and-so has come, so-and-so has come." The same takes place also at the second and third doors. Outside the first door are platforms on which the executioners sit, for the custom amongst them is that when the sultan orders a man to be executed, the sentence is carried out at the door of the audience hall, and the body lies there over three nights. Between

the first and second doors there is a large vestibule with platforms along both sides, on which sit those whose turn of duty it is to guard the doors. Between the second and third doors there is a large platform on which the principal naqib [keeper of the register] sits; in front of him there is a gold mace, which he holds in his hand, and on his head he wears a jewelled tiara of gold, surmounted by peacock feathers. The second door leads to an extensive audience hall in which the people sit. At the third door there are platforms occupied by the scribes of the door. One of their customs is that none may pass through this door except those whom the sultan has prescribed, and for each person he prescribes a number of his staff to enter along with him. Whenever any person comes to this door the scribes write down "So-and-so came at the first hour" or the second, and so on, and the sultan receives a report of this after the evening prayer. Another of their customs is that anyone who absents himself from the palace for three days or more, with or without excuse, may not enter this door thereafter except by the sultan's permission. If he has an excuse of illness or otherwise he presents the sultan with a gift suitable to his rank. The third door opens into an immense audience hall called *Hazar Uslun*, which means 'A thousand pillars.' The pillars are of wood and support a wooden roof, admirably carved. The people sit under this, and it is in this hall that the sultan holds public audiences.

(c) The Sultan's court, Ibn Battuta¹⁶

As a rule his audiences are held in the afternoon, though he often holds them early in the day. He sits cross-legged on a throne placed on a dais carpeted in white, with a large cushion behind him and two others as armrests on his right and left. When he takes his seat, the wazir stands in front of him, the secretaries behind the wazir, then the chamberlains and so on in order of precedence. As the sultan sits down the chamberlains and naqibs say in their loudest voice *Bismillah*. At the sultan's head stands the 'great king' Qabula with a fly-whisk in his hand to drive off the flies. A hundred armour-bearers stand on the right and a like number on the left, carrying shields, swords, and bows. The other functionaries and notables stand along the hall to right and left. Then they bring in sixty horses with the royal harness, half of which are ranged on the right and half on the left, where the sultan can see them. Next fifty elephants are brought in, which are adorned with silken cloths, and have their tusks shod with iron for greater efficacy in killing criminals. On the neck of each elephant is its mahout, who carries a sort of iron axe with which he punishes it and directs it to do what is required of it. Each elephant has on its

back a sort of large chest capable of holding twenty warriors or more or less, according to the size of the beast. These elephants are trained to make obeisance to the sultan and incline their heads, and when they do so the chamberlains cry in a loud voice *Bismillah*. They also are arranged half on the right and half on the left behind the persons standing. As each person enters who has an appointed place of standing on the right or left, he makes obeisance on reaching the station of the chamberlains, and the chamberlains say *Bismillah*, regulating the loudness of their utterance by the rank of the person concerned, who then retires to his appointed place, beyond which he never passes. If it is one of the infidel Hindus who makes obeisance, the chamberlains say to him ‘God guide thee.’

(d) Loves the company of learned men, Shihabuddin al Umari¹⁷

The jurist *Abul Fadhl Omar bin Ishaq ash-Shibli* narrated to me that this Sultan does not leave the company of learned men whether in travel or in residence. He says: We were with him in one of his conquests. When we were on the way news of the victory reached him from the advance guard while we were in his presence. Then a joy befell him and he said: This is due to the blessing of those Ulama. Then he ordered them to enter the public treasury and they carried away as much wealth as they could. Those who were weak amongst them appointed a substitute who carried this wealth for them. The narrator continues, “They entered the treasury, but I did not enter, not did many of my peers because we did not belong to that group. Every one of those carried away two purses, each one containing 10,000 *dirhams*. But one of them carried three purses, two beneath his armpit, the other one on his head. When the Sultan saw them, he laughed in astonishment at the avarice of him who carried three. He (Sultan) asked about the rest of the persons and those who had not entered like me. It was said to him that these were below those because those were professors and these were assistants. He then ordered 10,000 *dirhams* to be given to everyone of them, and they were distributed among us. The narrator continues: the beacon of *shariat*, (Muslim Law) is standing on account of him and love for men of letters is found with him. They are shown honour and veneration. They exert to the highest to preserve that by which their reputation is established, by improving their mind and their appearance and in persevering in studying and in imparting knowledge, and right deliberation in all matters and moderation in all their affairs.

(e) Generosity of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Ibn Battuta¹⁸

I shall now mention a few of his magnificent gifts and largesses...

The doctor Shams ad-Din, who was a philosopher and a born poet, wrote a laudatory ode to the sultan in Persian. The ode contained twenty-seven verses, and the sultan gave him a thousand silver dinars for each verse. This is more than has ever been related of former kings, for they used to give a thousand dirhams for each verse, which is only a tenth of the sultan's gift. Then too when the sultan heard the story of the learned and pious qadi Majd ad-Din of Shiraz, whose history we have written in the first volume, he sent ten thousand silver dinars to him at Shiraz. Again, Burhan ad-Din of Sagharj [near Samarqand] was a preacher and imam so liberal in spending what he possessed that he used often to contract debts in order to give to others. The sultan heard of him and sent him forty thousand dinars, with a request that he would come to Delhi. He accepted the gift and paid his debts with it, but went off to Cathay and refused to come to the sultan, saying "I shall not go to a sultan in whose presence scholars have to stand."

One of the Indian nobles claimed that the sultan had put his brother to death without cause, and cited him before the qadi. The sultan walked on foot and unarmed to the qadi's tribunal, saluted him and made obeisance, having previously commanded the qadi not to rise before him or move when he entered his court, and remained standing before him. The qadi gave judgement against the sultan, to the effect that he must give satisfaction to his adversary for the blood of his brother, and he did so. At another time a certain Muslim claimed that the sultan owed him a sum of money. They carried the matter before the qadi, who gave judgement against the sultan for the payment of the debt, and he paid it.

When a famine broke out in India and Sind, and prices became so high that a maund of wheat rose to six dinars, the sultan ordered that every person in Delhi should be given six months' provisions from the granary, at the rate of a pound and a half per person per day, small or great, freeman or slave. The doctors and qadis set about compiling registers of the population of each quarter and brought the people, each of whom received six months' provisions.

(f) Foreigners honoured by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Ibn Battuta¹⁹

The king of India, Sultan Muhammad Shah, makes a practice of honouring strangers and distinguishing them by governorships or high dignities of State. The majority of his courtiers, palace officials, ministers of state, judges, and relatives by marriage are foreigners, and he has issued a decree that foreigners are to be given in his country the title of 'Aziz [Honourable], so that this has become a proper name for them.

(g) Cruelty of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Ibn Battuta²⁰

This king is of all men the fondest of making gifts and of shedding blood. His gate is never without some poor man enriched or some living man executed, and stories are current amongst the people of his generosity and courage and of his cruelty and violence towards criminals...

In spite of all we have said of his humility, justice, compassion for the needy, and extraordinary generosity, the sultan was far too ready to shed blood. He punished small faults and great, without respect of persons, whether men of learning, piety, or high station. Every day hundreds of people, chained, pinioned, and fettered, are brought to his hall, and those who are for execution are executed, those for torture tortured, and those for beating beaten. It is his custom that every day all persons who are in his prison are brought to the hall, except only on Fridays; this is a day of respite for them, on which they clean themselves and remain at ease – may God deliver us from misfortune ! The sultan had a half-brother named Masud Khan, whose mother was the daughter of Sultan ‘Ala ad-Din, and who was one of the most beautiful men I have ever seen on earth. He suspected him of wishing to revolt, and questioned him on the matter. Masud confessed through fear of torture, for anyone who denies an accusation of this sort which the sultan formulates against him is put to the torture, and the people consider death a lighter affliction than torture. The sultan gave orders that he should be beheaded in the market place, and his body lay there for three days according to their custom.

(h) Inhabitants asked to leave Delhi, Ibn Battuta²¹

One of the gravest charges against the sultan is that of compelling the inhabitants of Delhi to leave the town. The reason for this was that they used to write missives reviling and insulting him, seal them and inscribe them, “By the hand of the Master of the World, none but he may read this.” They then threw them into the audience-hall at night, and when the sultan broke the seal he found them full of insults and abuse. He decided to lay Delhi in ruins, and having bought from all the inhabitants their houses and dwellings and paid them the price of them, he commanded them to move to Dawlat Abad. They refused, and his herald was sent to proclaim that no person should remain in the city after three nights. The majority complied with the order, but some of them hid in the houses. The sultan ordered a search to be made for any persons remaining in the town, and his slaves found two men, in the streets, one a cripple and the other blind. They were brought before him and he gave orders that the cripple should be hung from a mangonel and the blind man dragged

from Delhi to Dawlat Abad, a distance of forty days' journey. He fell to pieces on the road and all of him that reached Dawlat Abad was his leg. When the sultan did this, every person left the town, abandoning furniture and possessions, and the city remained utterly deserted. A person in whom I have confidence told me that the sultan mounted one night to the roof of his palace and looked out over Delhi, where there was neither fire nor smoke nor lamp, and said "Now my mind is tranquil and my wrath appeased." Afterwards he wrote to the inhabitants of the other cities commanding them to move to Delhi to repopulate it. The result was only to ruin their cities and leave Delhi still unpopulated, because of its immensity, for it is one of the greatest cities in the world. It was in this state that we found it on our arrival, empty and unpopulated, save for a few inhabitants.

(i) The army and officers of the Government, *Subh-ul-A'sha*²²

It is related that his army consists of 900,000 horsemen, a part of them are at His Majesty's court, others are scattered in the whole country. His Diwan provides for the means of subsistence for all of them. The army consists of Turks, Khitais, Persians, Indians and people of various nations. All of them have branded horses, excellent weapons and are elegant in appearance. The officers of his army are the Khans, Maliks, Amirs, Sipah-Salars and then the ranks.

He relates that in the Sultan's service there are eighty Khans or more and that each of them has followers according to his rank. The Khan has ten thousand horsemen, the Malik one thousand, the Amir one hundred, and the Sipah-Salar less than that. None of the Sipah-Salars are considered worthy to be near the Sultan, but they can be appointed as Valis or to posts equal to the rank of Vali. The Sultan has ten thousand Turkish slaves and ten thousand eunuchs; one thousand cashholders and one thousand Bashmaqdars [in charge of horseshoes of the Sultan]. He has two lakhs of *stirrup* slaves, who wear weapons, accompany him always and fight on foot in front of him. The whole army is exclusively attached to the Sultan and his Diwan pays them, even those who are in the service of the Khans and Maliks and Amirs. Fiefs cannot be given to them by their masters as it is the custom in Egypt and Syria....

Besides these he has one thousand falconers (*bazdar*) who carry the birds of prey for hunting while riding the horses and three thousand drivers who obtain the game; five hundred courtiers (*nadim*) and two hundred musicians besides his one thousand slaves who are specially trained for music; one

thousand poets of fine taste and wit in Arabic, Persian and Hindi. His Diwan pays all these as long as they are men of spotless purity and chastity, in public and private life.

(j) Royal elephants and slaves, Shihabuddin al Umari²³

The Sultan has 3000 elephants which are covered in battle with iron trappings inlaid with gold. In times of peace they are covered with housing of silk brocade and different kinds of silk adorned with figures. They are adorned with canopy and seats overlaid with plates; and wooden towers are fixed on them with nails and the Indians construct their seats for fighting. On an elephant are from 10 to 6 men according to the strength of the elephant.

The Sultan has 20,000 Turkish slaves. *Al-Bazzi* says: 10,000 eunuchs, 1,000 treasurers, 1,000 *Bashmaqdars*, 2,00,000 attendants, who wear weapons and march with the Sultan in front of him.

(k) Karkhanas, Shihabuddin al Umari²⁴

This Sultan has an embroidery house in which 4,000 silk-workers who make different kinds of cloth for robes of honour and garments and gifts in addition to the stuff which is imported from China, Iraq and Alexandria. The Sultan distributes every year 2,00,000 complete garments, namely 1,00,000 in spring and 1,00,000, in autumn. The garments, of spring are mostly from Alexandrian stuffs made in Alexandria; the garments of summer are all of silk made in the factory in Delhi and stuff from China and Iraq. He distributes (them) in Khanqahs and hospices.

The Sultan has 4,000 embroiderers who manufacture the brocades for the harem and manufacture things for his use which he bestows upon the officers of the state and presents (them) to their wives...

(l) Conquests of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Shihabuddin al Umari²⁵

The first place which was conquered was the country of Tilink [the Kakatiya kingdom of Telengana, was conquered by Muhammad bin Tughluq before his accession]. It is an extensive province with many villages, the number of which is nine hundred thousand and nine hundred. Then the province of Jajnagar [capital of Orissa] was conquered. In it there are 70 fine cities all ports on the sea, the revenue of which consists of pearls, elephants, different kinds of cloth, perfumes and aromatics. Then the province of Lakhnauti [Bengal, it was conquered by the Sultan's father] was conquered which has

been the seat of nine kings. Then the province of Devagir [the northern most Hindu kingdom of the south] was conquered. It has 84 strong hill forts. *Sheikh Burhanuddin Abu Bakr bin al-Khallal al-Bazzi* related that there are one crore and two lakh villages in it. Then the province of Dursamand [Dwarasamudra] was conquered where *Sultan Bilal Deo* [Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala king of Dwarasamudra] and five infidel kings reigned. Then the province of Mabar was conquered.

It is a big country having ninety ports on the seacoast the revenue of which is derived from perfumes, muslin (lains), various kinds of cloth and other beautiful things....

The Sufi Shaikh Burhanuddin Abu Bakr bin al-Khallalh Muhammad al-Bizzi has related to me the following: This Sultan sent his army to the province of...[name cannot be deciphered, Telingana?] and it is in the neighbourhood of Dewogir, in the extremity of its frontiers. The people were infidels and every king was called 'rai'. When the troops of the Sultan took the field against him he sent a messenger saying: Say to the Sultan that he should refrain from us and whatever he wishes in the form of wealth it will be given to him, he should send as many beasts of burden as he likes to carry away. The commander of the army sent information to the Sultan as to what he (the rai) had said. His answer came back that he should refrain from fighting them and give quarter to the Rai. When he presented himself before the Sultan, he honoured him very much and said to him: I have never heard the like of what you have said. What is the amount of wealth you have got that you have told me to send you as many beasts of burden as I like to carry that. The Rai replied: Seven rais have preceded me in this country and everyone of them collected 70,000 Babin and all of them are still with me. He said: A *bobin* is very wide cistern from the four sides of which one descends into it with ladders. The Sultan was surprised at his speech and ordered the sealing of the *babins* with his name (to preserve them). So they were sealed with the name of the Sultan. Then he ordered the Rai to nominate a viceroy in his country and that he himself should reside in Delhi and he offered him Islam, but he refused. So he let him act freely in the matter of his religion and he stayed in his court appointing a regent for him in his country and the Sultan assigned attendants for him, suitable for one like him and sent to that country great sums to be distributed to his people as alms saying that they were counted amongst the number of his subjects. The Sultan did not interfere with the *babins*, but only put on them the seal and left them in the same condition under his seal. I have related this according to what *al-Bazzi* related

and he is known for his veracity. The responsibility is with him. He who wants further information should turn to him.

(m) His Holy Wars, Shihabuddin al Umari²⁶

This Sultan is not slow in waging Holy War (*Jihad*). In the holy war by land or by sea his bridle or his spear do not deviate (from it). This is the sole object which engages his eye and his ear. He has spent a large amount in exalting the word of Faith and in spreading Islam in these regions, so that the light of Islam was spread in these parts and the lightning of the true guidance flashed in these regions and the fire-temples were destroyed and the Buddha's statues and idols were broken and the land was freed from those who were not (included) in the land of security, that is, those who had not entered the contract of a *Zimmis* and through him Islam was spread up to the farthest East, and reached up to where the Sun rises, and he carried the banners of the Islamic people as *Abu Nasr-al-Aini* says, to where never a banner had reached and no chapter, *surat*, or verse (*ayat*) was read of the Quran. Then he built mosques and places of worship and replaced music by prayer-call and silenced the mumblings of the Magians by the recitation of the Quran, and he directed the people of this faith (Islam) against the fortresses of the infidels. And he has appointed them with the help of God as the heirs of their property and their lands and the country which they had never trodden under foot: land after land was placed under the banner of this Sultan. On land his banners are like eagles and on sea the banners are like the crows of the running ships, so that no day passes without the sale of thousands of slaves for the lowest prices on account of the great number of captives and prisoners.

B. SULTAN OF BEDAR

1. Rulers and subjects at Bedar, Athanasius Nikitin²⁷

The rulers and the nobles in the land of India are all Khorassanians. The Hindoos walk all on foot and walk fast. They are all naked and barefooted, and carry a shield in one hand and a sword in the other. Some of the servants are armed with straight bows and arrows.

2. Nobility and condition of people, Athanasius Nikitin²⁸

The land is overstocked with people; but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. They

are wont to be carried on their silver beds, preceded by some twenty chargers caparisoned in gold, and followed by 300 men on horseback and 500 on foot, and by horn-men, ten torchbearers and ten musicians.

The sultan goes out hunting with his mother and his lady, and a train of 10,000 men on horseback, 50,000 on foot; 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour, and in front one hundred horn-men, 100 dancers, and 300 common horses in golden clothing, 100 monkeys, and 100 concubines, all foreign (haurikies).

The sultan's palace

The sultan's palace has seven gates, and in each gate are seated 100 guards and 100 Mahomedan scribes, who enter the names of all persons going in and out. Foreigners are not admitted into the town. This palace is very wonderful; everything in it is carved or gilded, and, even to the smallest stone, is cut and ornamented with gold most wonderfully. Several courts of justice are within the building.

3. Hindus at Bedar, Athanasius Nikitin²⁹

I came to Bedar from Kulongher on the day of Philip (14th of November)...and made acquaintance with many Hindoos, told them what was my faith; that I was neither Mahomedan nor . . . (caaedronie, saiadenie?), but a Christian; that my name was *Ofonasey*, and my Mahomedan name *Khoza Issuf Khorossani*. After that they no more endeavoured to conceal anything from me, neither their meals, nor their commerce, nor their prayers, nor other things; nor did they try to hide their women. And I asked them all about their religion, and they said: 'We believe in Adam;' and they hold the *Budhs* to be Adam and his race. There are in all eighty-four creeds, and all believe in *Boot* (Buddha), and no man of one creed will drink, eat, or marry with those of another. Some of them feed on mutton, fowls, fish, and eggs, but none on beef.

4. Bedar-Vijayanagar conflict, Athanasius Nikitin³⁰

The sultan (of Bedar) moved out with his army on the fifteenth day after the Ulu Bairam to join Melich-Tuchar at Kulburga. But their campaign was not successful, for they only took one Indian town, and that at the loss of many people and treasures.

The Hindoo sultan Kadam is a very powerful prince. He possesses a numerous army, and resides on a mountain at Bichenegher (Bijanagar). This

vast city is surrounded by three forts, and intersected by a river, bordering on one side on a dreadful *jungel*, on the other on a dale; a wonderful place, and to any purpose convenient. On one side it is quite inaccessible; a road goes right through the town, and as the mountain rises high with a ravine below, the town is impregnable.

The enemy besieged it for a month and lost many people, owing to the want of water and food. Plenty of water was in sight, but could not be got at.

This Indian stronghold was ultimately taken by Melikh Khan Khoda, who stormed it, having fought day and night to reduce it. The army that made the siege with heavy guns, had neither eaten nor drunk for twenty days. He lost five thousand of his best soldiers. On the capture of the town twenty thousand inhabitants, men and women, had their heads cut off; twenty thousand, young and old, were made prisoners, and sold afterwards at ten tenkas and also at five tenkas a head; the children at two tenkas each. The treasury, however, having been found empty, the town was abandoned.

C. THE SULTAN OF PADUA

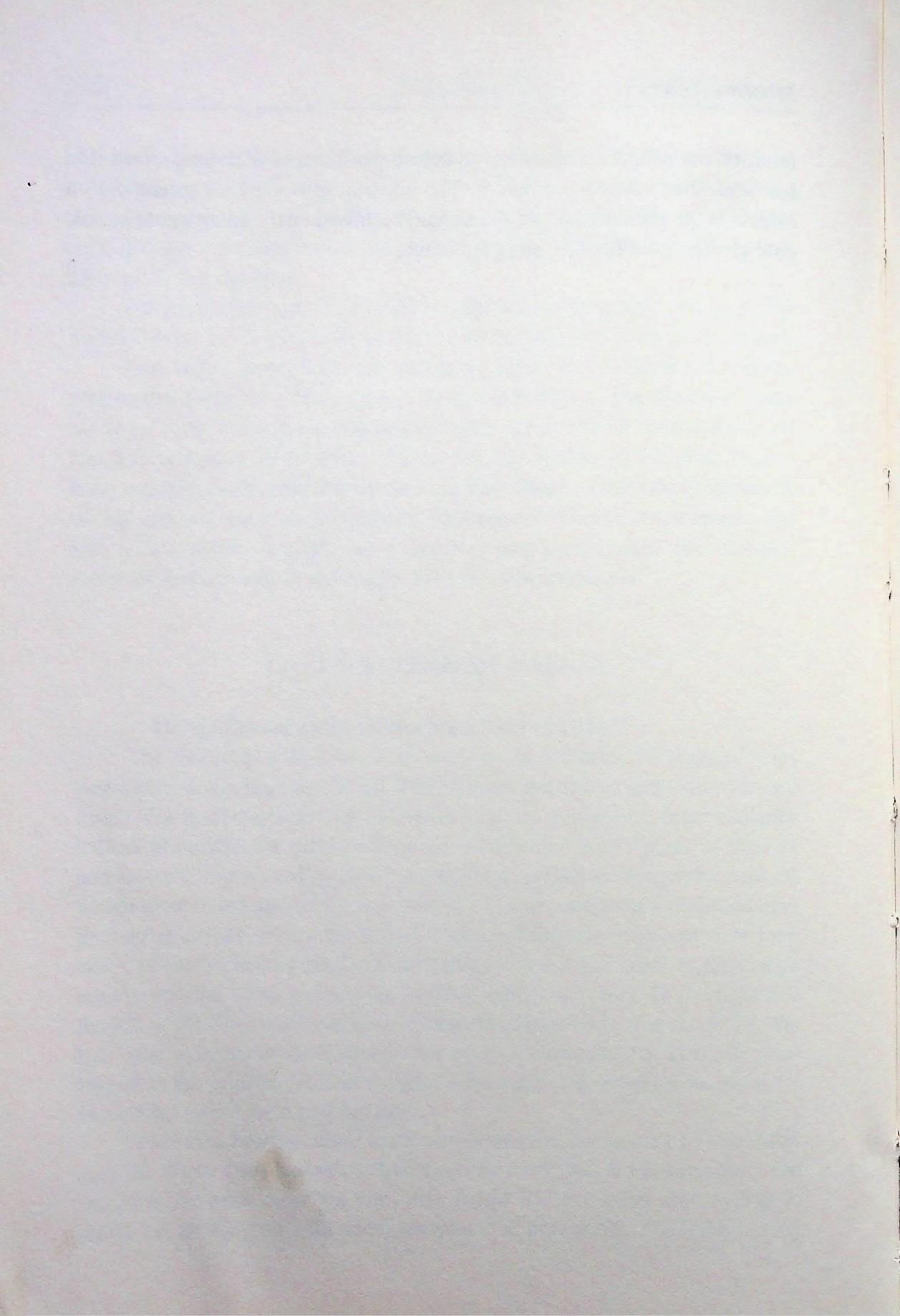
Ming Chinese ambassador's account in 1415³¹

The dwelling of the King is all of bricks set in mortar, the flight of steps leading up to it is high and broad. The halls are flat-roofed and white-washed inside. The inner doors are of triple thickness and of nine panels. In the audience hall all the pillars are plated with brass ornamented with figures of flowers and animals, carved and polished. To the right and left are long verandahs on which were drawn up (on the occasion of our audience) over a thousand men in shining armour, and on horseback outside, filling the courtyard were long ranks of (our) Chinese (soldiers) in shining helmets and coats of mail, with spears, swords, bows and arrows, looking martial and lusty. To the right and the left of the King were hundreds of peacock feather umbrellas and before the hall were some hundreds of soldiers mounted on elephants. The king sat cross-legged in the principal hall on a high throne inlaid with precious stones and a two-edged sword lay across his lap...

Two men bearing silver staffs and with turbaned heads came to usher (us) in. When (we) had taken five steps forward (we) made salutation. On reaching the middle (of the hall) they halted and two other men with gold staffs led us forward with some ceremony as previously. The King having

returned our salutations, kowtowed before the Imperial Mandate, raised it to his head, then opened and read it. The imperial gifts were all spread out on carpets in the audience hall... (The Sultan) bestowed on the envoys gold basins, gold girdles, gold flagons, and gold bowls.





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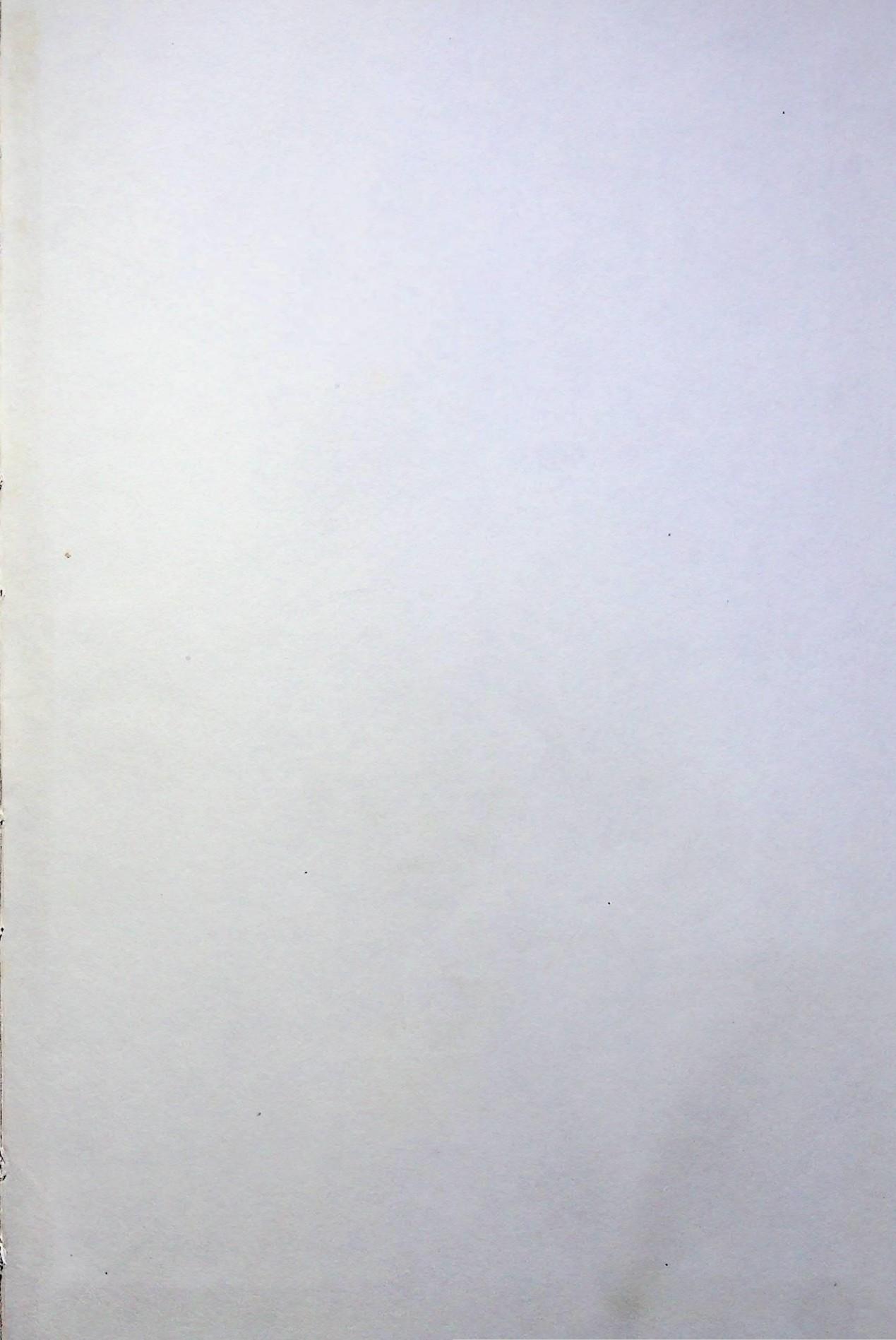
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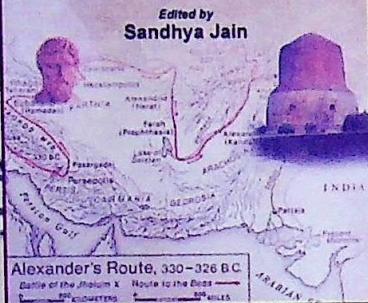


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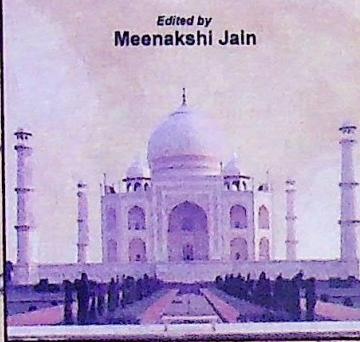
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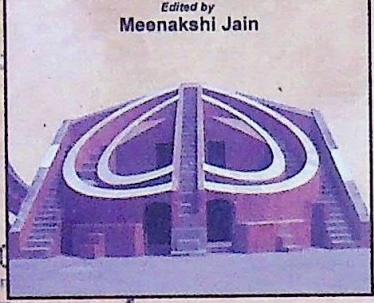
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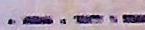
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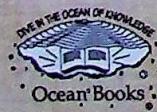


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